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TO
SIR EDWARD DENISON ROSS, K.T., C.I.E., Ph.D., F.R.A.S.,
THIS LITTLE BOOK
IS MOST RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED
AS AN HUMBLE TRIBUTE OF ADMIRATION FOR HIS SPLENDID
SCHOLARSHIP OF ORIENTAL LANGUAGES,
AND IN GRATITUDE FOR HIS PERSONAL KINDNESS TO
THE AUTHOR.

Mohammed taken in one form or other from the various books written on the subject. It is hoped that it will help, however imperfectly, in unveiling the true figure of the Prophet of Islam.

ABU'L-FAZL

February 1910.

NOTE TO SECOND EDITION.

The first edition of the book had run out within a short time of its publication, and although there were frequent demands for it the book was not republished earlier, as the compiler was looking forward to replace it by his larger edition of the Life of Mohammed in four volumes which is still in MS. This brochure has since been thoroughly revised, and some additions and alterations made therein.

June 1925.

M. A.-F.

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INTRODUCTION.

IN order to enter upon an intelligent study of the life of Mchammed, it is necessary, to the right appreciation of his achievements in the moral world, to know the circumstances of the people among whom it was his lot to be cast, with the political and religious aspects of the period.

Towards the south-west of Asia there lies the country of Arabia,* washed on the west by the Red Sea, on the south by the Indian Ocean, on the east by the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman, and extending north to the confines of Babylonia and Syria. At the time of Mohammed's birth the greater part of Arabia was under a foreign yoke; the principalities bordering on Syria and Persia were under the sway of the Emperors of Constantinople and the

* So called from Semitic *Arabah*, 'desert,' 'waste,' descriptive of the physical character of the country

Chosroes of Persia. A portion of the coasts of the Red Sea to the south of Mecca was subject to the Christian kings of Abyssinia. But the province of Hijaz, 'the barrier,' had effectually resisted alike the curiosity and the attacks of the nations who fought around it for the empire of the world. In its valleys lie the holy cities of Mecca and Medinah, the birthplace and cradle of Islam.

The Arabs of the desert preserved almost intact the manners, customs, and the primeval simplicity of the early patriarchs. They lived in tents, and their principal wealth consisted in their camels, horses, and male and female slaves.

Brave and chivalrous, the Arab was always ready to defend the stranger who claimed his protection, while he would stand by a member of his own tribe and defend him even at the risk of his own life, whether he were right or wrong. He was generous and hospitable to a fault. Pride of birth was his passion, and poetry his greatest delight. But his vices were as conspicuous

as his virtues, and drunkenness, gambling, and the grossest immorality were very prevalent amongst them, and shamelessly published and boasted of in all sorts of immoral poetry. Robbery and murder were his ordinary occupation, for the Arab looked on work and agriculture as derogatory to his dignity, and thought that he had a prescriptive right to the properties of those who condescended to such mean offices. The death of an Arab, however, was revenged with much rigour and vindictiveness by the fierce laws of the blood-feud, and they believed that if a man's blood were not avenged by blood, a small winged insect called Hamah or Sadi issuing from the skull of the killed, would fly screeching through the heavens and cry, "Give me to drink, O! give me to drink,"—meaning the murderer's blood, until his death was revenged. Female captives taken in war were made slaves by the victors, and instructed in singing and dancing, and were compelled to prostitute themselves; the price

of prostitution being appropriated by the owners.* In times of famine, they would bleed their camels and drink their blood; in cases of drought they would take a cow into the neighbouring mountains, tie some dry hay to her tail, and setting fire to it leave her there. Emancipation of slaves was a virtue opposed to the canon of Arab manliness. Polygamy was a general practice among them, and monogamy was looked down ^{upon} with contempt. Cruel, and superstitious too, they were; but amongst their many inhuman customs, none was more revolting than that, commonly practised by them, of burying their female children alive.†

* Cf. Koran xxiv. 33.

† This varied with different tribes; sometimes when a woman was ready to fall in labour they dug a pit on the brink whereof she was to be delivered, and if the child happened to be a daughter, they threw it into the pit, but if a son, they saved it alive. Others let her live till she was six or nine years of age, when her mother having perfumed her and adorned her, the father led her to a well or pit dug for that purpose, and having bid her look down into it pushed her in

The position of women amongst them was in no wise an elevated one; and although there are instances on record of heroines and poetesses, they were, for the most part, looked down^{upon} with contempt. The marriage-knot was tied in the simplest fashion and untied as easily, divorce depending on the option or caprice of the husband.*

headlong, as he stood behind her, and then filling up the pit, levelled it with the rest of the ground

The Koran thus refers to it—

“They ascribe daughters to God,—glory be to Him (and far be it from Him)!—and to themselves what they desire

“But when one of them is given the glad tidings of (the birth of) a female (child), his face becomes overshadowed and black, and he is sorely distressed

“He skulks away from the people, because of the evil of the glad tidings given him: shall he keep it with disgrace, or bury it in the dust? How ill do they judge!”—xvi. 57-9.

There was also the system of offering male children to the gods.

* Some of the ancient Arabic proverbs will best illustrate the ideas of pre-Islamic Arabia in regard to women:

“A man can bear anything but the mention of

As for government, they had virtually none; the best born and the bravest was recognized as head of the tribe, and led them to battle; but he had no personal authority over them and no superiority but that of the admiration which his qualities gained for him.

The religion of the ancient Arabs was "little higher than animistic polydæmonism;" the great objects of worship were the sun, the stars, and the three moon-goddesses,—al-Lat, the bright moon; Manat, the dark; and al-Uzza, the union of the two—whilst a lower cultus of trees, stones, and mountains shows that the religion had not quite risen above simple fetichism. There

his wives."

"Women are the whips of Satan."

"Trust neither a king, a horse, nor a woman."

"Our mother forbids us to err, but herself runs into error."

"What has a woman to do with the councils of a nation?"

"No calamity is more detrimental to mankind than woman."

"A bad omen is to be found in a woman, a house,

are traces of a belief in a Supreme God behind this pantheon, and the moon-goddesses and other divinities were regarded as daughters of the Most High. The various deities—but not the Supreme God—had their temples where human sacrifices were offered. Besides the tribal gods, individual households had their special penates.* They had their gods, their divin-
ing arrows, their oracle-trees. The greater part believed in no future existence, and those who did had, at their death, their she-camel (which they called Baliyah) tied by their sepulchre, and so left, without meat or drink, to perish, and accompany
or a horse ”

* Ten only of the idols of ancient Arabia are mentioned by name in the Koran .

Jibt and *Taykut* (iv 51) were two idols of the Koreish whom also a part of the Jews worshipped.

Al-Lat (iii 19) was the chief idol of the tribe of Thakif at Tayif.

Al-Uzza (*Ibid*) has been identified with Venus, but it was worshipped under the form of an acacia tree, and was the deity of the tribe of Ghatafan.

Manat (*Ibid*) was a large sacrificial stone worshipped by the tribes of Khuzaah and Hudhayl

them to the other world, lest they should be obliged, at the resurrection, to go on foot, which was reckoned very scandalous; and since death was regarded as the end, strictly so called, of existence, so was there neither recompense for virtue nor punishment for vice.

A like moral and religious degradation was to be found among the Jews and Christians. The former had come to seek in that

Wadd (xxxi 23) was worshipped by the tribe of Kalb in the form of a man, and is said to have represented heaven.

Suaa (*Ibid*) was a female deity of the tribe of Hamadan

Yaghuth (*Ibid*) was a deity of the tribe of Muddhij in the form of a lion

Yauk (*Ibid.*) was an idol of the tribe of Murad in the shape of a horse

Nasi (*Ibid*) was, as its name implies, the image of an eagle, and worshipped by the tribe of Himyar

It is said that at the time of Mohammed not fewer than 360 idols were standing in the Temple of Mecca. The chief of the minor deities was Hubal, an image of a man, said to have been originally brought from Syria. There were also images representing Abraham and Ishmael, each with divining arrows in his hands, whom also a part of the Jews worshipped.

land of liberty an asylum from the persecution of the Romans and had there formed many powerful parties; the Christians had also fled thither to escape the massacres by Nestorian Eutychianism and Arian discussions. Nothing can be more deplorable than the condition of Christianity at this time. "So far," says Sale, "from being endued with active graces, zeal, and devotion, and established within itself with purity of doctrine, union, and firm profession of the faith, that on the contrary, what by the ambition of the clergy, and what by drawing the abstrusest niceties into controversy, and dividing and subdividing about them into endless schisms and contentions, they had so destroyed that peace, love and charity, from among them, which the Gospel was given to promote, and instead thereof continually provoked each other to that malice, rancour, and every evil work, that they had lost the whole substance of their religion, while they thus eagerly contended for their own imaginations concerning it; and in a manner quite

drove Christianity out of the world by those very controversies in which they disputed with each other about it " *

The scattered branches of the Christian Church in Asia and Africa were at variance with each other, and had adopted the wildest heresies and superstitions. They were engaged in perpetual controversies and torn to pieces by the angry disputes of the Arians, Sabellians, Nestorians and Eutychians; whilst the simony, the incontinence, the general barbarism and ignorance which were to be found amongst the clergy caused great scandal to the Christian religion and introduced universal profligacy of manners among the people. The grossest idolatry had usurped the place of the simple worship instituted by Jesus—that of an All-Wise, Almighty, and All-Beneficent Being, without equal and without similitude. There were to be found Christian sects impious enough to invest the mother of Jesus with the honours

* George Sale, Preliminary Discourse (sec. ii.) prefixed to *The Koran*,

and attributes of a goddess. The worship of relics and images ^{as} were inseparably blended with the religion of Jesus, which commanded to address the one only living God. Such were the scenes which the Church of Christ presented at the time of Mohammed.

In fact, about this time all had abandoned the principles of their religion to indulge in never-ending wranglings upon dogmas of a secondary importance. It was at this time when the social fabric was falling to pieces on all sides, when the religions that were to keep it together had fallen to the lowest abyss of degradation, that Mohammed appeared in the world. The piety of Moses and of Christ rejoiced in the assurance of a future prophet,* more illustrious than themselves, and the Evangelist's promise of the Paraclete was pre-

* Cf Deuteronomy xviii 15, 18, xxxiii 2. Habakkuk iii 3, Genesis xvii 20, xxii 17, 18, Isaiah xxi. 7, John i. 20-25.

figured in the name,* and accomplished in the person, of the veritable "Seal of the Prophets."†

* The Song of Solomon v. 10-16, Haggai ii 7, John xiv. 25, 26, xvi 7-16. On this subject the curious reader is referred to Syed Ahmed Khan, *Essay on the Prophecies respecting Mohammed as contained in both the Old and the New Testaments* London Trübner and Co, 1869

† *Khâtama'n-nabiyyin*. (Koran xxxiii 40) This is explained elsewhere as "an apostle from God, confirming what is with them." (Koran ii 101.)

CHAPTER I.

BIRTH, ANCESTRY AND PARENTAGE OF MOHAMMED.

MOHAMMED, the Prophet of Islam, was born in Mecca on Monday the 12th of Rabi I., in the "Year of the Elephant,"* corresponding to the 29th of August 570 A.C. He belonged to the valiant and illustrious tribe of the Koreish, of which there were two branches, descended from two brothers, Hashim and Abd-Shams† Hashim, the great grand-father of Mohammed, was a great benefactor of Mecca. The city, situated as it is in the midst of a barren and stony country, was in former times often subject to scarcity of provisions. At the beginning

* *Vide* p 16

† As regards the base origin of Mohammed asserted by some of the Christian writers, Gibbon expresses the following opinion "The base and plebeian origin of Mahomet is an unskilful calumny of the Christians, who exalt instead of degrading the merit of their adversary His descent from Ishmael was a national privilege or fable, but if the first steps of the pedigree are dark and doubtful, he could produce many generations of pure and genuine nobility he sprung from the tribe of Koreish and the family of Hashem, the most illustrious of the Arabs, the princes of Mecca, and the hereditary guardians of the Caaba "

of the sixth century of the Christian era. Hashim established the custom of sending out regularly from Mecca two caravans, one in winter to Yeman, and the other in summer to Syria.* By these means abundant supplies were brought to Mecca, as well as a great variety of merchandize. The city became a commercial mart, and the tribe of Koreish, which engaged largely in these expeditions, became wealthy and powerful. Hashim, at this time, was the receiver of the tax imposed on the Koreish by Kosai (one of their ancestors) for the support of the pilgrims who visited Mecca; and the income derived from their contributions, joined to his own resources, was employed in providing food to the strangers who congregated at Mecca during the season of the pilgrimage.

On the death of Hashim, about the year 510 A.C., his younger brother, Muttalib, succeeded to his honours, and won for himself the noble designation of al-Faid (the generous) by his worth and munificence. Hashim had left behind him a son, named Sheibah, by a lady of Yethrib† named Salma. On the death of his brother, Muttalib brought his nephew from Yethrib

* Koran cvi.

† Modern Medinah.

The people of Mecca mistook Sheibah for a slave of Muttalib and called him Abdul-Muttalib (the slave of Muttalib) Muttalib died at Kazwan, in Yeman, towards the end of 520 A.C., and was succeeded by his nephew, Sheibah (generally known by the name of Abdul-Muttalib), as the virtual head of the Meccan commonwealth.

Abdul-Muttalib was blessed with several sons and daughters. Those of his sons who figure in history were Abdul-Uzza, surnamed Abu-Lahab the persecutor of the Prophet; Abd-Manaf, better known as Abu-Talib (born in 540 A.C., died in 620 A.C.), Abdullah (born in 545 A.C., died in 570 A.C.) born of Fatimah, daughter of Amr, the Makhzumite; Abbas (born in 566 A.C., died in 652 A.C.); and Hamzah

Abdullah was married to Aminah, daughter of Wahb, the chief of the family of Zohri. The year following the marriage of Abdullah was full of momentous events. Abriahah, the Ethiopian king of Yeman who was also a Christian, had planned the conversion of Arabia, and as the best means to do this effectually he vowed the destruction of the Kaabah (the national pantheon of all Arabia), and set out against it at the head of a considerable army, wherein was also a huge ele-

phant—an animal quite new to the Arabians and very frightful.*

The Meccans, at the approach of so considerable a host, retired to the neighbouring mountains, being unable to defend their city or temple. The morning dawned brightly on the Abyssinians, when, to the surprise of the whole population of Mecca, they saw the invading army beginning to beat a retreat. Scarcely had they attacked the Kaabah when they were attacked by an irresistible foe: a pestilence had broken out in their ranks, and for fear of death, they hastened to get away from a spot which seemed to them the abode of death. Some were swept away by a terrible storm of rain and hail that seemed to be sent upon them by the wrath of God; the rest fled towards Yeman, but perished by the way; none of them reaching Sanaa, except Abrahah, who died soon after his arrival there, being struck by a plague or putrefaction, so that his body opened, and his limbs rotted off by piece-meal.†

* Whence the Arabs called this year the "Year of the Elephant"

† This is referred to in the Koran cv, as an instance of Divine retribution on a people who had used compulsion in religion against unoffending worshippers, although idolatrous.

Shortly after this event, while returning home from a journey to Gaza, in Southern Syria, Abdullah fell ill at Yathrib, and died in the twenty-fifth year of his age. A few days after, Aminah gave birth to Mohammed.* Arabian writers vie with one another in recording in glowing terms the prodigies they believed to have signalized the natal hour of their future prophet. "The rationalistic historian smiles, the religious controversialist, who, upon *a priori* reasoning, accepts without comment the accounts of the wise men following the star, scoffs at these marvels. To the critical student, whose heart is not devoid of sympathy with earlier modes of thought, and who is not biassed with pre-conceived notions, 'the portents and signs' which the Islamist says attended the birth of his Prophet are facts deserving of historical analysis. We moderns perceive, in the ordinary incidents in the lives of nations and individuals, the current of an irresistible law,

* Mohammed was born in the house of Mecca known as the house of Mohammed, son of Yusuf Najjar. Mohammed, the prophet, first acquired it by right of inheritance, and gave it to Akil, under whose possession it remained till he sold it to Mohammed, son of Yusuf and brother of Hajja, whose name it now bears. People visit the place as sacred. It is situated in a lane called *Zakatu'l-Maulid* in the *shab* (or quarter) of Abu-Talib.

what wonder then that 1300 years ago they perceived in the fall of a nation's memorial the finger of God pointing to the inevitable destiny, which was to overtake it in its iniquity.”*

His mother nurtured him for a week, but care and sorrow drying up the fountains of her breast, she made over her infant child to Sawibah, a slave-girl of Abu-Lahab, who fostered him for a few days; after which he was confided to the care of Halimah, a Bedouin woman of the tribe of Saad. Women of these tribes were accustomed to come to Mecca twice a year, in spring and autumn, to foster the children of its inhabitants; but they looked for the offspring of the rich, where they were sure of ample recompense and turned with contempt from this heir of poverty. At length the good Halimah was moved to compassion, and took the helpless orphan to her home in one of the pastoral valleys of the mountains.

But the blessing of heaven, says the Arabian traditionist, rewarded the charity of Halimah. While the child remained under her roof everything around seemed to

* Syed Ameer Ali, M A , C I.E , *The Spirit of Islam*, or the Life and Teachings of Mohammed. Page 70. Second edition. London W. H. Allen & Co , Ltd. 1896.

prosper ; a marvellous abundance reigned over her fields and peace prevailed in her dwelling. At the age of five the infant was taken back by his mother and brought up with the tenderest care *

He remained with his parent until his sixth year, when she took him to Yathrib on a visit to her relatives; but on his journey home she died, and was buried at Abwa, a village between Yathrib and Mecca. Her grave was ever afterwards a place of pious resort and tender recollection to her son. The orphan-child was then thrown upon the care of his grand-father, Abdul-Muttalib, in whose house he remained for three or four years, treated with the utmost care and tenderness. Abdul-Muttalib was now well-stricken in years, having out-lived the ordinary term of human existence. Finding his end approaching, he called to him his son Abu-Talib, and bequeathed

* Short as was the time he was with his foster-mother, Mohammed ever retained a grateful recollection of the kindness he had received from her. Halimah visited him at Mecca, after his marriage with Khadijah and was rewarded with many valuable presents from Mohammed, which he had received from his wife and departed for her home with joyful heart. Upon another occasion, we are told, Mohammed spread his mantle for her to sit upon in token of great regard, placing his hand upon her in a familiar and affectionate manner.

Mohammed to his especial protection. The good Abu-Talib took his nephew to his bosom, and ever afterwards was to him as a parent.

It was now that Mohammed began to exhibit indications of an intelligent and inquiring mind. He loved to indulge in solitary meditation, and even when his playmates wished him to join in their amusements, he replied, "Man is created for a nobler purpose than indulgence in frivolous pursuits." He was but a child of nine when the *Ghazwatul-Fijar*, the "Sacrilegious Wars," so called from the violation of the sanctity of the sacred month, broke out at Okaz between the Koreish and Kinanah on one side, and the Hawazin on the other, and continued with varying fortunes and considerable loss of human life for several years (about A.C. 580 to 590).* Here was held a great annual fair in the sacred month of Dhulkaadah, when it was forbidden to engage in war or shed human blood. Other fairs were held at different places; but Okaz was the "Olympia of Arabia"; here came

* It was occasioned by a poet from the country between Mecca and Tayif vaunting the superiority of his tribe too eagerly and thus inciting the mercurial Koreish to draw their swords. Blood flowed fast, and in time the struggle spread to the allies of each tribe.

the poet-heroes of the desert to display their poetical and literary talents, to win the admiration of the assembled multitude. During the weeks Okaz presented a gay scene of pleasure and excitement. At the fair, religion clashed against religion in hopeless opposition; and yet amid the discord might be discerned some common elements, to which all reverently bowed. The Jew hated the Christian, and the Christian reviled the Jew, and both united in invectives against the Arab tribes as heathens devoted to the wrath of an offended Deity. Yet again, these Arabs revered the name of Abraham as the builder of the Kaabah and author of the faith and rites observed by them. What, if there were truth in all these systems—divine truth dimly glimmering through human prejudice, malevolence, and superstition? Would not that be a glorious mission to act on the foundation of the previous faiths, but on a still wider and more liberal basis, and by removing the miserable barriers which hide and sever each sect and nation from its neighbour, to make way for the illumination of truth and love emanating from the Source of all good? Visions and speculations such as these might again and again have agitated the orphan-child of Aminah.

Shortly after this, Mohammed accompanied his uncle, Abu-Talib, in one of his mercantile journeys to Syria, "where was opened before him a scene of social misery and religious degradation, the sight of which never faded from his memory." The active share taken by the youthful Mohammed in this and the other journeys developed in him superior address, and the esteem and confidence procured him by his qualities were still more heightened by the sincerity of his words and actions, the regularity of his life, and the accuracy of his judgment. As he advanced in years, other merchants, gladly availing themselves of his great tact and ability, employed him as agent in their commercial transactions. Mohammed continued in his uncle's employment until his twenty-fifth year, when one of the leading men of the city dying, and his widow, by name Khadijah,* a kinswoman of his, requiring a factor to manage her business, he was recommended to her as the fit person for the purpose. Having accepted the terms she offered him, he traded for her for some time at Damascus and other places, and upon returning to Mecca proceeded to Khadijah to report to her in

*She was the daughter of Khewailid, the great grandson of Kosal.

person the result of his commercial labours. The widow was highly satisfied with the balance-sheet ; " but there was a charm in the dark and pensive eye, in the noble features and graceful form of her assiduous agent, as he stood in a submissive attitude before her, which delighted her even more than did the increase of her wealth." The comely widow was at this time forty years of age ;* she had been twice married and widowed, and had borne several children, yet unable to resist the charm of so manly a person and the attractions of so sensible and enthusiastic a mind, it was not long before she presented her hand to him in marriage. The marriage, indeed, proved a singularly happy one, and was solemnised amidst universal rejoicings. In spite of the disparity of age between Mohammed and his wife, there always existed the tenderest devotion on both sides.

At this time Mohammed was in the prime of manhood : his figure was commanding, his aspect majestic, his features regular and most expressive, his eyes black and piercing, his nose slightly aquiline, his mouth well-formed and furnished with pearly teeth,

* Equivalent to one of fifty in Europe, according to the estimate of Dr Lestner.

while his cheeks were ruddy with robust health. Art had imparted to his naturally black flowing hair and beard a lighter chestnut hue. His captivating smile, his rich and sonorous voice, the graceful dignity of his gestures, the apparent frankness and heartiness of his manner, gained him the favourable attention of all whom he addressed. He possessed talents of a superior order—his perception was quick and active, his memory capacious and retentive, his imagination lively and daring, his judgment clear and perspicuous, his courage dauntless, and his tenacity of purpose in the pursuit of his life, and his patient endurance, ~~can~~ not but extort the admiration of all. His natural eloquence was enhanced by the use of the purest dialect of Arabia, and adorned by the charm of a graceful elocution.

A period of fifteen years now occurs during which the Prophet's history remains obscure and impenetrable.* We know nothing of him except his occasional appearance in public when the necessities of the

* It was, for aught we know of him, a sacred interval in which the man may be said "to have assisted at the birth of his own genius, preparing in silence and maturing by meditation, the mission entrusted to him by the Almighty"—John Davenport, *An Apology for Mohammed and the Koran*, p 13 J Davy and Sons

city of his birth demanded it. "In Mecca, there was no such institution as a magistracy to insure peaceable enjoyment of rights and property. The ties of blood and family, indeed, afforded some protection to each citizen against injustice and spoliation, but strangers were exposed to all kinds of oppression. They would often be robbed not only of their goods and chattels, but also of their wives and daughters. At the instance of Mohammed, the descendants of Hashim and of Muttalib, and the principal members of the family of Zohra and Taim bound themselves by a solemn oath to defend every individual, whether Meccan or otherwise, free or slave, from any wrong or injustice to which he might be subjected in the territories of Mecca, and to obtain redress for him from the oppressor."* This and the like public acts, his gentle, sweet disposition, his austerity of conduct, the

* This league was named *Hilful-Fudul*, or the Federation of the Fudul, in memory of an ancient society instituted with a similar purpose, among the Juhamites, and composed of four personages, named Fadl, Fadal, Mufaddal, and Fudail, collectively called Fudul. Mohammed was the principal member of this new association, which was founded shortly after his marriage with Khadijah. The league protected the weak and the oppressed, and continued in full force for the first half-century of Islam. — *Vide* Syed Ameer Ali, *The Spirit of Islam*, in loco.

severe purity of his life, his scrupulous refinement, his ever-ready helpfulness to the poor and the suffering, his noble sense of honour, his unflinching fidelity, his stern sense of duty had won him, among his compatriots, the noble and enviable designation of *Al-Amin*, the Trusty.

About this time Mohammed also set an example to his countymen by an act of humanity which had a salutary effect upon them. Some years ago, a young man of the name of Zeid, son of Harith, was brought as a captive to Mecca, by a party of free-booters, and sold to a nephew of Khadijah, who presented the young lad to her. Mohammed obtained Zeid as a gift from Khadijah, and immediatly set him free. Now that some years had elapsed, his father, Harith, hearing where his son was, took a journey to Mecca and offered a considerable sum for his ransom; * whereupon Mohammed said, "Let Zeid come hither, and if he chooses to go with you, take him without ransom; but if he chooses to remain with

* Because, in pre-Islamic Arabia, notwithstanding that a person had granted free emancipation to his slaves, he still retained the right of ownership over them, and could sell that right at his pleasure Cf Syed Ahmed Khan, *Essay on the Manners and Customs of the Pre-Islamic Arabians*, p. 9. London. Trubner and Co, 1870.

me, why should I not keep him?" And Zeid being come, declared that he would stay with his master who treated him as if he were his only son; with which the father acquiesced, and returned home well-satisfied.

CHAPTER II.

MOHAMMED THE PROPHET.

BEHOLD him! In the fortieth year of his life, his countenance calm and tranquil, and with a lambent glory resting on it, he passes (as was his wont) the month of Ramadan* in the cavern of Mount Hira, endeavouring by fasting, prayer, and solitary meditation,† to elevate his thoughts to the contemplation of Divine truth. And hark! a voice comes to him gently as the sough of the morning breeze:

Thou art the Man, thou art the Prophet of God.

Behold the Man! Again, whilst lying one night self-absorbed, he is called by a mighty Voice to cry.‡ Twice it calls, and twice he struggles and waives its call. But a fearful weight is laid on him, and an answer is rung out of his heart. "Cry!" calls out the Voice for a third time. And he says, "What shall I cry?" Comes the answer:—

Cry '§ in the name of thy Lord who created—

* Koran ii 181.

† Cf Exodus xxiv. 18, Matthew iv. 2.

‡ Cf Isaiah xl 6.

§ Cf Isaiah lvi. 1.

Created man from love !
Cry ! for thy Lord is the Most Beneficent,
Who taught the pen,
Taught man what he knew not ! *

Upon this Mohammed's mind was instantaneously illumined ; he felt as if the words spoken to his soul had been written in his heart. Mohammed, we are told, came trembling and agitated to Khadijah not knowing whether what he had heard was indeed true, and that he was a prophet decreed to effect that reform so long the object of his meditations, or whether it might not be a mere vision, a delusion of the senses. "O Khadijah!" said he, "What has happened to me?" He lay down, and she watched by him. Having recovered from the trance, he said, "O Khadijah! he of whom one would not have believed it (meaning himself) has either become a soothsayer or one possessed—mad." She replied, "God is my protection, O Abul-Kasim!† He will surely not let such a thing happen to thee. Hast thou not been loving to thy kinsfolk, kind to thy neighbours, charitable to the poor, hospitable to the stranger, faithful to thy word,

* Koran xcvi. 1-5.

† I e, father of Kasim, a name of Mohammed derived from one of his boys who died in infancy.

and ever a defender of truth and justice?"*

Khadijah hastened to communicate what she had heard to her cousin, Warakah, son of Naufal, who was old and blind, and "knew the scriptures of the Jews and Christians." Whereupon the old reader of the Jewish and Christian scriptures, who knew of the promise held out to mankind of a deliverer, spoke of his faith and trust, and cried out: "Holy! Holy! By Him in whose hand stands Warakah's life! thou

* Most of the Christian biographers of Mohammed assert as a fact that the Prophet had attacks of epilepsy. Syed Ahmed very aptly says: "History does not inform us that any Christian physician went to Arabia for the purpose of examining the bodily condition of Mohammed, nor is there anything said on the subject by Oriental writers. Whence, then, could such a notion have originated, and by whom was it encouraged and propagated?"

After considerable research the learned doctor ascertained that this false and ridiculous notion is to be attributed. first, to the superstition of the Greek Christians; and secondly, to the faulty translation of the Arabic text into Latin.—*Cf* Essay XII (Vol. I.) pp 17, 18.

John Davenport observes: "The assertion, so often repeated, that Mohammed was subject to epileptic fits, is a base invention of the Greeks, who would seem to *impute* that morbid affection to the apostle of a novel creed as a stain upon his moral character deserving the reprobation and abhorrence of the Christian world. Surely, those malignant bigots might have reflected that if Mohammed had really been afflicted with that dreadful malady, Christian charity ought to have commanded them to pity his misfortune

speakest true, O Khadijah! the angel who, in the days of old, was sent to Moses has appeared to thy husband. His annunciation is true. Thy husband will be the prophet of his people. Tell him this. Bid him be of brave heart."

The zealous support of the learned Warakah had a powerful effect upon the dubious mind of Mohammed. Then followed a period of waiting for the Voice to come again—"the inspiration of Heaven to fall once more upon the anxious mind."

Again, while wrapped in profound meditation, melancholy and sad, he felt himself called by the Voice:—

O thou wrapped up!

rather than rejoice over it, or affect to regard it in the light of a sign of Divine wrath"

Gibbon also calls it "an absurd calumny of the Greeks," and remarks that "the epilepsy, or falling sickness, of Mohammed is asserted by Theophanes-Zonaras, and the rest of the Greeks, and is greedily swallowed by the gross bigotry of Hollinger, Prideaux, and Maracci, the titles ('the wrapped up', 'the covered') of two chapters of the Koran can hardly be strained to such an interpretation; the silence, the ignorance of the Mohammedan commentators is more conclusive than the most peremptory denial, and the charitable side is espoused by Ockley, Gagnier, and Sale."

Syed Ahmed has also considered this question from a medical point of view. Cf Essay XII. (Vol. I) pp. 19-21.

Arise and warn,
And thy Lord magnify,
And thy raiment purify,
And abomination shun,
And lay no obligation for that thou doest much,
And, for thy Lord, work thou patiently." *

Whereupon he got up and girded himself for the work to which he was called. Henceforth his life is devoted to humanity. He preaches to them in season and out of season: whenever the Spirit moves him he pours forth his "burning eloquence" into the ears of a suspicious and incredulous audience.

His first convert was Khadijah, his faithful wife. She was the first to abandon the idolatry of her countrymen, and to accept the teachings of Mohammed; whose character she had the best opportunities to watch during the last fifteen years (of his life.)

After her, Ali, son of Abu-Talib, was the next disciple. Zeid, son of Harith, who, notwithstanding his freedom, had cast in his lot with Mohammed, became the third convert; after which the conversions of Abdul-Kaabah, son of Abu-Kohafah, afterwards known as Abu-Bakr, Uthman son of Affan, Abdur-Rahman son of Auf, Saad

* Koran lxxiv 1-7.

son of Abi-Wakkas, Zobeir son of Awwam, followed in rapid succession. Other proselytes also came from the humbler walks of life.

"It is strongly corroborative," observes Sir William Muir, "of Mahomet's sincerity that the earliest converts to Islam were his bosom friends and the people of his household; who, intimately acquainted with his private life, could not fail otherwise to have detected those discrepancies which more or less invariably exist between the professions of the hypocritical deceiver abroad and his actions at home." "This intense faith and conviction on the part of the immediate followers of Mohammed," says a great observer of facts, "is the noblest testimony to his sincerity and his utter self-absorption in his appointed task."

Three years of unwearied effort produced the pitiful result of a score or so of converts, mainly from the poorest classes. He now determined to appeal publicly and boldly to the Koreish to abandon their idolatry and the nameless abominations attendant upon it. With this object he convened an assembly on the hill of Safa, and there spoke to them of the enormities of their crimes in the sight of God, warned them of the fate that had overtaken the nations that had passed un-

heeded the preachers of by-gone ages, and invited them to abjure their old impious worship, and adopt the faith of truth, love and purity.

But to all this the Koreish turned a deaf ear. They mocked at him, they reviled him for calling them together on so idle an errand, and departed with taunts and scoffs on their lips.

Nothing daunted by the failure of his first attempt, Mohammed called a second meeting of the sons and descendants of Abdul-Muttalib at his own house, where, having regaled them, he stood forth and announced at full length his revelations received from Heaven and the divine command to impart them to those of his immediate line:

“Ye children of Abdul-Muttalib!” cried he with enthusiasm and fervour, “to you of all men has Allah* vouchsafed these most precious gifts. In His name I offer you the blessings of this world and endless joys hereafter. God Almighty has commanded me to call you unto Him. Who, therefore, among you will be assisting to me herein, and become my brother, my vicegerent?”

* Arabic ‘Al,’ meaning ‘the,’ and ‘ilah,’ ‘worthy to be adored,’ ‘a god.’ Allah is thus ‘the god’ *par excellence*.

All remained silent ; some wondering, others smiling with derision. At length Ali, starting up with youthful zeal, offered himself to the services of the Prophet, though modestly acknowledging his youth and physical weakness. Mohammed threw his arms round the generous youth, and pressed him to his bosom. "Behold my brother, my vicegerent!" he exclaimed. But the Koreish mocked at his words and laughed at the enthusiasm of Ali.

Having failed to induce the Koreish he turned his attention to the pilgrims visiting Mecca. To them he carried his message. But the Koreish warned the strangers against holding any communication with Mohammed, whom they represented as a dangerous magician. As the pilgrims and traders went back to their homes they carried with them the news of the advent of the enthusiastic preacher, who, at the risk of his own life, was calling aloud to the nations of the world to forego their lawless practices and impious worship and to adopt the religion of truth, love and purity.

The Koreish were now thoroughly alarmed ; Mohammed's preaching betokened a serious revolutionary movement. In preaching the Unity of God, he was attacking the very existence of the idols, in the guardian-

ship of which consisted not only the supremacy of Mecca, but the welfare and importance of the State. The chiefs of the Koraish therefore began to look with no favourable eye upon the Prophet, whom they regarded as a dangerous political innovator. He preached the perfect equality of man in the sight of the All-Loving. This levelled old distinctions. They would have none of it, and urgent measures were needed to stifle the movement before it gained further strength.

The greatest difficulty with which Mohammed had to contend in the outset of his prophetic career, was the ridicule of his opponents. When he walked the streets he was subjected to jeers, and taunts, and insults by the people. If he attempted to preach, his voice was drowned by discordant noises and ribald songs; nay, dirt was thrown upon him when he prayed. His followers were bitterly persecuted on account of their faith. Some recanted only to profess Islam once more when released from their torments; but the majority held firmly to their faith. Bilal, a negro slave, was for several days successively exposed to the scorching rays of the sun of the desert, with an enormous block of stone placed over his chest, until ransomed by Abu-Bakr, who

in like manner purchased the liberty of several other slaves, Mohammed's own financial position not allowing him to do this himself. They killed with excruciating torments Yasar and Samiyah, his wife, and inflicted fearful tortures on Ammar, their son, till he recanted and was released. He came weeping to Mohammed, who wiped his tears with his own hand and consoled him, saying, "What fault was it of thine if they forced thee?"

Whoso denies God after he has believed, not he who is compelled and whose heart rests secure in the faith, but he who opens (him) breast to infidelity, on him shall be wrath from God, and for him shall be a great torment.*

"The incarceration and tortures," says Stobart, "chiefly by thirst in the burning rays of the sun, to which these humble converts were subjected, to induce their recantation and adoration of the national idols, touched the heart of Mohammed, and by divine authority he permitted them, under certain circumstances, to deny their faith so long as their hearts were steadfast in it."†

Nor did the faith of Islam want its martyrs. Khobeib, son of Ada, being perfidiously sold to the Koreish was by them

* Koran xvi. 106.

† J. W. H. Stobart, B A., *Islam and its Founder*. p. 76
London 1878.

put to death in a most cruel manner, by mutilation, his flesh being cut off piecemeal; and being asked, in the midst of his tortures, whether he did not wish Mohammed in his place, answered, "I would not wish to be with my family, my substance, and my children, if Mohammed were to be pricked with a thorn." When bound to the stake, they said, "Abjure Islam, and we will let thee go." He replied, "Not for the whole world."

The animosity of the Koreish became more and more virulent, and proceeded to personal violence. Mohammed was assailed and nearly strangled in the Kaabah, and was rescued with difficulty by Abu-Bakr, who himself suffered personal injury in the affray. Such of his disciples as had no powerful friends to protect them were in peril of their lives. Full of anxiety for their safety, Mohammed advised them to leave his dangerous companionship for the present, and take refuge in Abyssinia, where ruled a pious Christian king, reputed to be tolerant and just. With him Mohammed trusted his fugitive disciples would find refuge. And accordingly, a little band of fifteen Moslems fled into Abyssinia. This is called the first Flight in the history of Islam, and occurred in the fifth year of Mohammed's

mission (615 A. C.). These emigrants were soon joined by many of their fellow-sufferers and 'labourers' in the cause of Truth, until their number amounted to eighty-three men and eighteen women.

The Koreish were much annoyed at the escape of the Moslems, as they had hoped and determined to suppress the movement completely. They now sent a deputation to the Negus of Abyssinia, demanding the surrender of the fugitives. The Negus sent for the exiles, and inquired into the allegations against them; whereupon Jaafar, son of Abu-Talib, acting as spokesman for the fugitives, spoke thus. —

O King! we were plunged in the depth of ignorance and barbarism, we adored idols, we lived in unchastity, we ate dead bodies; and we spoke abominations, we disregarded every feeling of humanity, and the duties of hospitality and neighbourhood; we knew no law but that of the strong; when God raised among us a man, of whose birth, truthfulness, honesty, and purity we were aware, and he called us to the unity of God, and taught us not to associate anything with Him, he forbade us the worship of idols, and enjoined us to speak the truth, to be faithful to our trusts, to be merciful, and to regard the rights of neighbours, he forbade us to speak evil of women, or to eat the substance of orphans; he ordered us to fly vices, and to abstain from evil, to offer prayers, to render alms, to observe the fast. We have believed in him, we have accepted his teachings and his injunctions to worship God, and not to associate anything with Him. For this reason our people have risen against us, have persecuted us in order to make us forego the worship of God and return to the worship of idols of wood and stone

and other abominations. They have tortured us and injured us, until finding no safety among them, we have come to thy country, and hope thou wilt protect us from their oppression."*

Amru, son of As, and Abdullah, son of Rabiya, who were sent on deputation by the Koreish to obtain the persons of the fugitives, had opened their embassy in the Oriental style by a parade of rich presents. But the king was so impressed by the persuasive eloquence and the prepossessing appearance of Jaafar, that so far from giving up the fugitives, he took them more especially into favour and protection, and returning to Amru and Abdullah the presents they had brought, dismissed them from his court.†

The failure of this attempt increased the hostility of the Koreish towards the small body of Moslems who were left in Mecca.

One Amru, son of Hisham, surnamed Abul-Hikam,‡ insulted Mohammed with opprobrious language, and even personally

* Quoted from Syed Ameer Ali, M. A., C I. E., *The Spirit of Islam*, pp 100, 101.

† Mohammed ever remembered with gratitude the kindness his followers had received at the hands of this Christian King, and on his death, offered a short prayer for him as for a Moslem. (Cf. *Sayings*, 750).

‡ I e, Father of Wisdom; afterwards called Abujahl, "Father of Ignorance."

maltreated him. This violence led to a reaction. The outrage was reported to Hamzah, an uncle of Mohammed, as he returned to Mecca from hunting. Hamzah was no proselyte to Islam, but considered himself bound to protect his nephew, the "Al-Amin," the Trusty, as Mohammed was certainly acknowledged by friend and foe. Marching with his bow unstrung in his hand to an assemblage of the Koreish, where Amru was vaunting his recent triumph, he dealt the boaster a blow over the head. The kinsfolk of Amru rushed to his assistance, but the brawler stood in awe of the vigorous arms and fiery spirit of Hamzah, and sought to pacify him. He alleged in palliation of his outrage the apostacy of Mohammed; but Hamzah was not to be appeased. "Well!" cried he, fiercely and scornfully, "I also do not believe in your gods of stone; will you compel me?" He forthwith declared himself a convert, took the oath of adhesion to the Prophet, and became one of the most zealous and valiant champions of the new Faith.

Finding all their endeavours to dissuade Mohammed from his purpose unavailing, the Koreish had now recourse to temptation.

Their chiefs came to Mohammed; and one of them acting as their spokesman

opened the discourse in the following words :

"Son of my friend ! thou art a man distinguished by birth ; thou dost stir up the land, thou makest division in families, thou castest reproach upon our gods, thou dost tax our ancestors and wise men with error and impiety : but we desire to treat thee with consideration. Listen now to the proposals we have to make, and reflect whether it would not be well for thee to accept one them."

"Speak on," said Mohammed, "I listen."

"Son of my friend !" continued the other, "be it thy aim to acquire wealth by this affair, we will assess ourselves to make thee the richest man of the house of our father Koreish. If it be honour that thou desirest, we will make thee our lord, and will do nothing without thee. If it be the Jinn that has taken possession of thee, we will bring thee the most able physicians, and we will pour out our gold until they cure thee."

"Is that all?" asked the Prophet.

"Yes."

"Well, now listen to me:—

In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate.
Ha. Mim * revealed from the Merciful, the Compassionate. a writing the signs whereof are made distinct, an Arabic recital for a people who know, a bearer of

* Two letters of the Arabic dialect.

glad tidings and a warner, but most of them turn aside, and hearken not.

They say, Our hearts are veiled from that to which thou dost call us, and in our ears is a heaviness, and between us and thee is a curtain; so act thou, verily, we are acting (too). Say thou, I am only a man like yourselves: it is revealed to me that your God is one God; go straight then to Him, and ask pardon of Him.

And woe to those who join (other gods with God), who give not alms, and who in the hereafter believe not!

Verily, those who believe and do good works, for them is a never-failing reward *

Turning to the Korcish chiefs, the one who had addressed the Prophet exclaimed, "Never did man hear a discourse like this. It strikes home; it is not poetry, nor the language of a magician. Let us leave him, or he will certainly pervert us."

"He has cast his spells upon thee," they all cried.

"I tell you frankly what I feel," replied the other.

Not satisfied with this trial, they came a second time to the Prophet offering the same temptations. The reply was, as ever, firm and truthful:

"I am desirous neither of riches nor ambitious of dignity nor of dominion. I come to you with glad tidings and warnings. I give you the words of my Lord. I admonish you. If you accept the message I bring you, God

* Koran xli 1-8.

will be favourable to you both in this world and the hereafter. If you reject my admonitions, I will be patient, and leave God to judge between you and me.”*

They now demanded of Mohammed supernatural proofs of what he asserted.

They said, “Unless thou come to us with a sign from thy Lord, we will not believe.”

“But has no evidence come to them, of what is in the pages of old?” said Mohammed †

“Is it not a sign to them that the learned among the children of Israel know it?” ‡

They accused Mohammed of being in communication with devils.

“The devils do not descend with it,” was his reply; “nor is it fit for them, nor are they able (to do it).” §

“Shall I tell you,” he retorted, “upon whom the devils descend? They descend upon every lying, sinful person.” ||

They said, “We will by no means believe on thee until thou make a spring (of water) to gush forth for us out of the earth, or there be (made) for thee a garden of palm trees and vines, and thou make rivers to

* Cf Koran, xxxviii 86, etc

‡ xxvi 197.

§ xxvi 210, 211

† xx 133

|| xxvi 221, 222

gush forth in its midst, gushing; or thou make the heaven to fall down upon us to punish (us), as thou dost pretend (it will); or thou bring God and the angels before (us); or there be a house of gold for thee; or thou climb up into the heaven; yet will we not believe in thy climbing until thou send down to us a book that we may read.”*

The reply was as simple as truthful: “Glory be to my Lord! Am I more than a man (sent as) an apostle?”†

They said, “Has God raised up a man as an apostle?”

“Had angels walked on earth (as) familiarly, God would surely have sent down to them an angel from heaven as His apostle.”‡

They said, “Unless an angel be sent down, we will not believe.”§

“But,” said Mohammed, “if God had sent down an angel, the matter would have been decided, and then would they have no respite. And if God had appointed an angel, He should certainly have made him a man too, and then He would have made perplexing for them what they deem perplexing (now).”||

* Koran xvii 90-93
xvii 94, 95

† xvii 93
§ vi 8

“ And even if God were to open above them a gate in the heaven, and all the day long they were climbing into it, they would still say, It is only that our eyes are drunken; nay, we are a people bound by spell. *

“ And if God had sent down to *me* a book on paper, and *ye* had touched it with your hands, still those who believe not will say, ‘This is only plain magic.’ †

They said, “ What an apostle is this? He eats food, and walks in the streets!” “ Unless an angel be sent down to him to be a preacher with him, (we will not believe). Or a treasure be sent down to him, or he have a garden whercof he may eat.” . . . ‡

“ God sent no apostles before *me* but they ate food and walked in the streets,” § was Mohammed’s reply.

“ Not until angels are sent down to us, or we see our Lord, will we believe,” they said.

“ The day they shall see the angels, there shall be no glad tidings on that day for the sinners, . . . and God will go on to the works which they have done.” ||

Never could they force Mohammed to

* Koran xv 14, 15.

† xxv. 7, 8.

‡ vi 7.

§ xxv 20

|| xxv 21-3.

attempt a miracle—that favourite resort of so many false prophets. No proof has ever been adduced that Mohammed at any time descended to any artifices or pseudo-miracles to enforce his doctrines or to establish his apostolic claims. On the contrary, he relied entirely upon reason and eloquence.

“Signs are only with God,” said Mohammed, “and I am only a plain warner.”*

“I have no power for myself to profit or to harm except as God pleases. If I knew the unseen, I should surely have much of good nor would evil touch me: I am no other than a warner and a bearer of glad tidings to people who believe †

“I say not to you, With me are the treasures of God, nor that I know the unseen; nor do I say to you, I am an angel: I follow only that which is revealed to me.”‡

But they only said, “Thou art not sent of God.”

The Prophet’s reply was, “God is witness enough between me and you, and he who has knowledge of the scripture” §

Then he called them to witness the wonders of Nature, and appealed to their intuitive reason alone.

* Koran xxix. 50.

† vi 50

‡ vii 188

§ xiii 48.

“ Verily, in the heavens and the earth are signs to the faithful ; and in your creation, and in the moving things which He has scattered abroad, are signs to people who are sure ; and in the alternation of night and day, and in the supply which God sends down from heaven whereby He quickens the earth after it has been dead, and in the shifting of the winds, are signs to people who have sense. These are the signs of God : *I* recite them to *you* with truth. In what message then will *ye* believe after God and His signs ? *

“ God it is who presses into your service the sea, that the ships may run therein at His bidding, and that *ye* may seek of His bounty ; . . . and He presses into your service what is in the heavens and what is in the earth : all is from Him. Verily, in that are signs to people who reflect.†

“ And of His signs is, that He created you of dust, and lo ! *ye* are become men scattered abroad. And of His signs is, that He has created for you, out of yourselves, wives, that *ye* may confide in her ; and He has put love and tenderness between you. Verily, in that are signs to people who reflect.

* Koran xlv 36

† xlv. 12, 13.

“And of His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the variety of your tongues and your colours. Verily, in that are signs to all the world.” *

“His thoroughly democratic conception of the divine government, the universality of his religious ideal, his simple humanity—all affiliate him,” says Samuel Johnson,† “with the modern world.”

But to all his exhortations the Koreish turned a deaf ear. They told the Prophet that they would never cease to stop him from preaching “until thou or we perish.”

In spite of all opposition, however, slowly but surely the new Faith gained ground. And the satires, the ill-names his enemies heaped upon Mohammed, only tended to make his words more widely known. The Koreish urged Abu-Talib to silence his nephew or to send him away; but finding their entreaties unavailing, they informed the old man that if his nephew and his followers persisted in their heresies, they should pay for them with their lives. Abu-Talib hastened to inform his nephew of the menaces, imploring him not to provoke

* Koran xxx 20 22

† Author of “Oriental Religions” Persia Boston, 1884. Islam, pp 530 782. Complete. 18s —India; 2 vols 21s

against himself and his family such numerous and powerful foes. Mohammed thought his uncle wished to withdraw his protection, but his high resolve did not fail him even at this moment. Firmly he replied, "By Him in whose hand stands my life! If they placed the sun on my right hand and the moon on my left, to persuade me, yet while God bids me, I will not renounce my purpose." And bursting into tears turned to depart. But the kind old Abu-Talib, though not a convert, was moved at his nephew's tears, and struck with admiration of the undaunted firmness of his nephew, recalled him and assured him of his continued protection.

The declared intention of Abu-Talib to protect his nephew excited the fury of the Koreish. The venerable patriarch, feeling that of himself he could not yield sufficient protection, appealed to the sense of honour of the children of Hashim and Muttalib to protect a distinguished member of their family, who was also the benefactor of the orphan and the helpless, the "Al-Amin," who never failed in word or deed. The appeal was nobly responded to with the only exception of one man Abu-Lahab, the most inveterate enemy of the Prophet.

About this time the new Faith gained a

valuable adherent in Omar, son of Khattab, one of the most uncompromising but most generous of the Prophet's enemies. He was in his twenty-sixth year ; of gigantic stature, prodigious strength, and great courage. His stern aspect, it is said, appalled the bold, and his very walking-staff struck more terror into beholders than another man's sword. This Arab youth was a nephew of Abu-Jahl, also one of the greatest adversaries of the Prophet. A zealous and devoted adherent of the religion of his forefathers, he hated and persecuted Mohammed as a dangerous innovator, who had come to lead his people astray, and to sow discord among them. He had undertaken, like most of the Koreish of the day, to penetrate to the retreat of Mohammed and to strike a poniard to his heart, the Koreish having promised large sums of money to whosoever should succeed in this bloody deed. While Mohammed was living in the house of Arkam, one of his disciples, Omar undertook to kill him.

The man had proposed, but God disposed otherwise. As Omar was on his way to the house of Arkam, he met a kinsman of his, also a secret convert, to whom he imparted his design. The man sought to turn from his bloody errand. "Before you slay

Mohammed," said he, "and draw upon yourself the vengeance of his relatives, see that your own are free from heresy." "Are any of *me* guilty of backsliding?" demanded Omar with astonishment. "Even so, thy very own sister Fatimah, and her husband Said."

Omar at once hastened to the dwelling of his sister. Here Khabbab, the devoted disciple of Mohammed, who had made them acquainted with his teaching and won them over to Islam unknown to Omar, was reading to them at that moment a new fragment of the Koran. When he heard Omar coming, he concealed himself.

Entering abruptly, Omar asked, "What was it you have been reading just now?" Their confusion convinced Omar of the truth of the accusation, and heightened his fury. In his rage, he struck Said to the earth, placed his foot upon his breast, and would have plunged his sword, had not his sister severely interposed. A blow on the face bathed her visage in blood. "Enemy of Allah!" sobbed Aminah, "dost thou strike me thus for believing in the true God? In spite of thee and thy violence, I will persevere in the true Faith." "Yes," added she with fervour and emotion, "there is no God but God, and Mohammed is the Apostle

of God. And now, Omar ! finish thy work."

Omar paused, but his eyes glancing involuntarily over some of the lines of the Koran,* which lay near him on the ground, was seized with wonder and conviction succeeding to admiration. "How nobly said and how sublime!" exclaimed Omar.

The words of the Koran sank deep into the heart of Omar. He read further, and when he came towards the end his conversion was complete.

Then with Khabbab he pushed his steps towards the house of Aikam, but altogether a different man. Knocking humbly at the door, he craved admission. "Come in, son of Khattab," exclaimed Mohammed, "What brings thee hither?" "I come," replied Omar, "a believer in the one God, and in thee His chosen Apostle." Mohammed received him with open arms. Omar henceforward continued to be one of the staunchest adherents of the Prophet. And heartfelt thanks went up to Heaven for the grace that had fallen on Omar.

Omar now walked on the left hand of the Prophet, and Hamzah on the right, to protect him from injury and insult, and they were followed by upward of forty

* Any piece of the Koran is also so called.

disciples. For the first time they passed in open day through the streets of Mecca, to the astonishment of its inhabitants. The Koreish regarded this procession with dismay, but dared not approach nor molest the Prophet, being deterred by the looks of those terrible men of battle. Hamzah and Omar ; who, tradition says, glared upon them like two lions that had been robbed of their young.

But the Koreish were so exasperated by this new triumph of Mohammed, that his uncle Abu-Talib feared they might attempt the life of his nephew, either by treachery or open violence. At his earnest entreaties, therefore, the latter accompanied by some of his followers withdrew to the *sheb* or quarter of Abu-Talib, a long and narrow defile to the east of Mecca. To the credit of Mohammed and of his clan, only one man of them refused to share his fate, though most of them did not hold with his doctrines. Sooner than give up their beloved kinsman, the well-known *Al-Amin*—they went, every man of them, save that one, into that quarter of the city, and there abode in banishment for three years.

The last measure of the kind-hearted Abu-Talib, in placing Mohammed and his disciples beyond the reach of persecution,

and giving them his own quarter as a refuge, was seized upon by the rival branch of Omeiyah as a pretext for a general ban of the rival line of Hashim. They accordingly issued a decree, forbidding the rest of the tribe of Koreish from intermarrying, or holding any intercourse, even of bargain or sale, with the Hashimites, until they should deliver their kinsman Mohammed, for punishment. This decree, which took place in the seventh year of the Prophet's mission, was written on parchment, and hung up in the Kaabah. It reduced Mohammed and his disciples to great straits, almost famishing them at times in the stronghold in which they had taken refuge. This was also beleaguered occasionally by the Koreish, to enforce the ban in all its rigour, and to prevent the possibility of supplies.

Sir William Muir's notice of this crisis in the life of the Prophet is as intensely Christian as it is true :

“ Let us for a moment look back to the period when a ban was proclaimed at Mecca against all the citizens, whether professed converts or not, who espoused his cause ; when they were shut up in the *sheb* or quarter of Abu Talib, and there for three years without prospect of relief endured

want and hardship. Those must have been steadfast mighty motives which enabled him amidst all this opposition and apparent hopelessness of success, to maintain his principles unshaken. No sooner was he relieved from confinement than, despairing of his native city, he went forth to Tayit, and summoned its rulers and inhabitants to repentance; he was solitary and unaided, but he had a message, he said, from his Lord. On the third day he was driven out of the town with ignominy, blood trickling from the wounds inflicted on him by the populace. He retired to a little distance, and there poured forth his complaint to God: then he returned to Mecca, there to carry on the same outwardly hopeless cause with the same high confidence in its ultimate success. We search in vain through the pages of profane history for a parallel to the struggle in which for thirteen years the Prophet of Arabia in the face of discouragement and threats, rejection and persecution, retained his faith unwavering, preached repentance, and denounced God's wrath against his godless fellow-citizens. Surrounded by a little band of faithful men and women, he met insults, menaces, dangers, with a high and patient trust in the future. And when at last the promise of safety

came from a distant quarter, he calmly waited until his followers had all departed, and then disappeared from amongst his ungrateful and rebellious people."*

The annual season of pilgrimage, however, when hosts of pilgrims repair from all parts of Arabia to Mecca, brought transient relief to the persecuted Moslems. During that sacred month, according to immemorial law and usage among the Arabs, all hostilities were suspended, and warring tribes met in temporary peace to worship at the Kaabah. Protected also by the immunity of the holy month, Mohammed would mingle with the pilgrims, and proclaim his revelations. Presently the devotion of the Prophet, his manly bearing under obloquy and reproach, and above all the "winged words of his eloquence," brought several men of influence and wealth into his faith, who returning to their respective homes, carried with them the seeds of the new Faith to distant regions.

Thus for three years the Hashimites lay under the ban, shut up in the ravine; when at last the Koreish grew ashamed of their work, and were glad of an excuse for removing it. It was found that the deed on

* Life of Mahomet, vol. iv pp. 314, 315

which it had been engrossed, had become illegible, and this being taken as an evidence of the divine disapproval of its contents, they listened to the appeal of the venerable Abu-Talib and allowed the prisoners to come forth and mix once more with the rest of the world.

The return of Mohammed and his disciples to Mecca was followed by important conversions, both of the inhabitants of the city and of pilgrims from afar.

Not long after, Mohammed was summoned to close the eyes of his uncle Abu-Talib, then upward of fourscore years of age, and venerable in character as in person. "The sacrifices to which Abu Talib exposed himself and his family for the sake of his nephew, while yet incredulous of his mission," says Muir, "stamp his character as singularly noble and unselfish." "They afford at the same time," continues the writer, "strong proof of the sincerity of Mahomet. Abu Talib would not have acted thus for an interested deceiver; and he had ample means of scrutiny." "The chivalry of Abu Talib in protecting the Prophet when he did not believe in his mission is remarkable, and it is a strong testimony," says Gilman, "to the honesty of Mohammed that he could make such an impression on a man of so much

force of character."

Scarcely three days had elapsed from the death of the venerable Abu-Talib, when Khadijah, the faithful and devoted wife of Mohammed, expired in his arms. The death of this his beloved partner was indeed a heart-rending calamity for him. For twenty-five years she had been his counsellor and supporter, and now his soul and his hearth had become desolate. Notwithstanding that at so advanced an age she must have lost every youthful charm, Mohammed had remained faithful to her to the last, never giving her a rival in his house nor in his heart.

Mohammed's gratitude to her memory survived her to his latest hour. Even the fresh and budding charms of Aycshah (a wife who had replaced her) could not obliterate the deep and mingled feeling of tenderness and gratitude for his early benefactress, "his angel of hope and consolation." Aycshah was piqued one day at hearing him indulge in these fond recollections. "O Apostle of God!" demanded the youthful beauty, "was not Khadijah stricken in years, her eyes dim and her teeth gone? Has not Allah given thee a fairer and a better?" "No, by Allah!" cried Mohammed, in an honest burst of generous emotion,

"there never was a better and a kinder help-mate! When I was poor, she enriched me; when I was pronounced a liar, she believed in me; when I was opposed and persecuted by the world, she remained true to me."

"I was never more jealous of any one of the Prophet's wives," said Ayesah, "than I was of Khadijah, although I never saw her; for the Prophet remembered her much, and many a time would he send presents to the friends of Khadijah; and although I often said to him, 'It is as though there never was another woman in the world;' but he would dilate upon her virtues in his own way."*

"He seems to have lived in a most affectionate, peaceable, wholesome way with this wedded benefactress; loving her truly, and her alone. It goes greatly against the impostor theory, the fact that he lived in this entirely unexceptionable, entirely quiet and commonplace way, till the heat of his years was done. He was forty before he talked of any mission from Heaven. All his irregularities, real and supposed, date from after his fiftieth year, when the good Kadijah died. All his 'ambition,' seemingly, had been, hitherto, to live an honest

* Cf *Sayings of the Prophet Muhammad*, 584.

life; his 'fame,' the mere good opinion of neighbours that knew him, had been sufficient hitherto. Not till he was already getting old, the prurient heat of his life all burnt out, and *peace* growing to be the chief thing this world could give him, did he start on the 'career of ambition,' and belying all his past character and existence, set-up as a wretched empty charlatan to acquire what he could now no longer enjoy! For my share," says Carlyle, "I have no faith whatever in that."*

Mohammed is said to have taken after the death of Khadijah, at different periods, several wives (not, however, a dozen or two, as ignorant writers would have it); and he is constantly upbraided on this account by the controversial writers, who adduce this circumstance as a demonstrative proof of his sensuality. But over and above the consideration that unbounded polygamy was in Mohammed's time frequently practised in Arabia and the neighbouring countries, and was far from being counted an immorality, it should be recollected that he lived from the age of five-and-twenty to that of fifty years 'satisfied' with one wife; that until she died at the age of sixty-five he took none

* Thomas Carlyle, 'On Heroes, Hero-worship and the Heroic in History,' lect. ii.

other; and it may then be asked, is it likely that a sensual man (as the Prophet of Islam is ignorantly called) of a country where unbounded polygamy obtained, should be 'contented' for five-and-twenty years with one wife, she being also fifteen years older than himself? and should he be the first to restrict polygamy, when no law, no religion did anything in that direction? Or, is it not far more probable that he took the many wives he did during the last thirteen years of his life chiefly out of a desire to unite the hostile and warring tribes, as Mohammed's marriages certainly tended to? * "I ask not of you any reward for it,

* Dr. Leitner's words are, in this connexion, deserving of our serious attention. He says: "It really seems to me that if men cultivated something like true charity, they would have a different view of other religions than they now hold, and that they would endeavour to learn about them from their original sources, instead of from the prejudiced second-hand reports of the opponents of these religions."

It may be noted here that all these wives were, with only *one* exception, widows. Nor was there any special provision for him in Law (as is generally made out), for it came after he had already been allied to the several wives he had, and as provided in his own law, "one wife only, or what ye have already got under your hands" (Koran iv. 3), he did but keep his own law in retaining them; especially when, with all the other Moslems, he had given his wives the alternative of either separating themselves from him or remaining linked together in weal and woe, and they had preferred to live with him (Koran xxxiii. 28, 29, 51). Mohammed

except the love of kinship,"* was Mohammed's frequent appeal to his people.

We have already mentioned Abu-Bakr and his various services to the cause of Islam in its most dubious state of existence. We have seen how he ransomed the poor dying Moslem slaves, and on more than one occasion saved Mohammed from imminent danger. It was the desire of his life to marry his little daughter, Ayesha, to Mohammed, and thus cement the attachment which already existed between himself and the Prophet. At the earnest solicitation of the disciple, the little maiden was betrothed to Mohammed. She was, however, married some years later.†

Mohammed soon became sensible of the loss he had sustained in the death of Abu-Talib, who had been not merely an affectionate relative, but a steadfast and powerful protector from his great influence in Mecca. At his death there was no one to check and counteract the hostilities of Abu-Sufyan and Abu-Jahl; who soon raised up such a spirit of persecution among the

henceforth also denied himself the privilege of marrying again even on the demise of some or all of his wives (Koran xxxiii 52), which his followers were free to.

* Koran xlii 23

† Ayesha in Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Daud, and Nasai.

Koreish, that Mohamⁱmed found it unsafe to continue in his native place. He set out, therefore, accompanied by his friend and follower Zeid, to seek a refuge at Tayif, a small walled town, about seventy miles from Mecca. It was one of the favoured places of Arabia, situated among vineyards and gardens. "Here grew peaches and plums, melons and pomegranates; figs, blue and green, the nebeck-tree producing the lotus, and palm-trees with their clusters of green and golden fruit."

Mohammed entered the gates of Tayif with some degree of confidence, trusting for protection, under God, to the influence of his uncle Abbas, who had possessions there. He could not have chosen a worse place of refuge. Tayif was one of the strongholds of idolatry. Here was maintained in all its vigour the worship of Al-Lat, one of the female deities worshipped by the ancient Arabs.

"There is something lofty and heroic," observes Sir William, "in this journey of Mahomet to Tayif; a solitary man, despised and rejected by his own people, going boldly forth in the name of God—like Jonah to Ninevah—and summoning an idolatrous city to repentance and to the support of his mission. It sheds a strong light on the

intensity of his own belief in the divine origin of his calling." *

Mohammed remained about a month at Tayif, seeking in vain to make proselytes among its inhabitants. When he attempted to preach, his voice was drowned by clamours. More than once he was wounded by stones thrown at him which the faithful Zeid endeavoured in vain to ward off. So violent was the popular fury at last, that he was driven from the city, and pursued for some distance beyond the walls by an insulting rabble of slaves and children.

Thus driven ignominiously from his hoped-for place of refuge, and not daring to return openly to his native city, he remained in the desert until Zeid procured a secret asylum for him among his friends at Mecca.† He lived here for some time retired from his people, preaching occasionally, but confining his efforts mainly to the strangers who congregated at Mecca and its vicinity during the season of the pilgrimage, hoping

* Muir, *The Life of Mahomet*, vol ii page 207.

† On his way back to Mecca a party of the tribe of Jinn (a people from Nisibin and Ninevah in Mesopotamia) heard Mohammed's preaching of the koran in the valley of Nakhlah and came over to his cause—*Vide* Koran xlv 29-31. Cf. a Mulavi Cheragh Ali, *A Critical Exposition of the popular 'Jihad,'* Introd pp xxiv to Calcutta : Thacker, Spink and Co. 1885.

to find among them some who would carry the truth to their people.

About this time the Prophet entered into a matrimonial connexion with the widowed wife of Sakran, one of his faithful disciples, who took refuge with his wife in Abyssinia from the persecution of the Koreish and died in exile. She had now returned to Mecca in utter destitution. At one time no one would give her food or protection; even her immediate relatives were unwilling to support her. As the only means of assisting the poor old woman, Mohammed, though straitened for the very means of his daily subsistence, married Saudah.

For a time all the attempts of Mohammed to gain converts among distant Yethribites were unsuccessful. Those who came to worship at the Kaabah drew back from a man stigmatised as an apostate; and the worldly-minded were unwilling to befriend one proscribed by the powerful of his native place. They afforded very little ground for hope; but trusting to God's tender care and pity, he rose superior to all his trembling forebodings and exultingly cried :

By the noon-day brightness !

By the night when it covers !

Thy Lord has not forsaken thee, nor is He displeased, and certainly thou hereafter shalt be better

for thee than the heretofore; and in the end thy Lord will surely give to thee, and thou shalt be well pleased. Did He not find thee an orphan and give (thee) a home? and found thee wandering and guided (thee)? and found thee needy, and enriched (thee)? * . . .

At length, one day as he was preaching on the hill of Akabah, a little to the north of Mecca, he drew the attention of certain pilgrims from the city of Yethrib. Struck by his earnestness and the truth of his words, they became his proselytes (620 A. C.), and returning to their city, spread the news of the advent of a prophet among the Arabs who was calling them to God and to put an end to their dissensions which had lasted for centuries.

A year passed by. These Yethribites returned, and brought six more of their fellow-citizens as deputies from the two principal tribes of Aus and Khazraj who occupied that city. On the same spot where the former six were converted, the newcomers gave in their allegiance to Mohammed. This was the first Pledge of Akabah. It ran as follows:

We will not join anything with God, nor steal, nor commit adultery, nor kill our children, nor come with a calumny which we have invented between our hands and feet, † nor will we disobey the Prophet in what shall be reasonable, ‡ and we will be faithful to him in weal and sorrow.

* Koran xciii. 18.

† I. e., knowingly.

‡ This is laid down in Koran ix 12.

On the return home of the pilgrims, Mohammed sent with them Musaab, son of Omair, one of the most learned and able of his disciples, with instructions to strengthen them in the faith and to preach it to their townsmen. Thus were the seeds of Islam first sown in the city of Yethrib. For a time they thrived but slowly. Musaab was opposed by the idolaters and his life threatened, but he persisted in his exertions, and gradually made converts among the principal inhabitants.

About this time hopes of the dawning of a new day, and glorious scenes of a happy future, now and then flitted across the mind of Mohammed. In one of these broodings occurred the notable Vision of Ascension. Its narrative is one in which tradition revels with congenial ecstasy. The rein has been given loose to a pious imagination. Both the journey and the ascent to heaven are decked out in the most extravagant colouring of romance, and in all the gorgeous drapery that fancy could conceive.*

* "Mohammad dreamed a dream, and referred to it briefly and obscurely in the *Kur-an*. His followers persisted in believing it to have been a reality—an ascent to heaven in the body—till Mohammad was sick of repeating his simple assertion that it was a dream."—Stanley Lane-Poole's *Selections from the Kur-an*, Introd p. lvi. Cf. Syed Ahmed, *Essays*, 1 pt. xi.

But, as has been pointed out, the "Night-Journey" is an allegory of easy explanation. The *Burak*—the white steed of wonderful form and qualities, unlike any animal ever seen and, in truth, different from any animal ever before described—which signifies lightning, is *thought*, which moves more swiftly than the electric fluid; and the ladder of light by which Mohammed is said to have ascended up to heaven was *contemplation*, by which men pass through all the heavens up to the Throne of God; and the wonderful cock, whose crowing God took delight in hearing, and which man never heard or regarded, was the prayer of the just; and so on with all the rest.*

Thus in spite of the beautiful garb in which tradition presents this wonderful incident, "it is still a grand vision full of glorious imagery, fraught with deep meaning."†

In the following year (622 A. C.) the

* "Upon this point, moreover, it may be remarked that the ridicule and sarcasm in which many Christian writers have indulged on the subject of the narrative, are, to say the least, injudicious, as being equally applicable to the visions of Jacob Comp Gen xvii. 11, 12; Ezek. i 4-29; *Ibid* iv 12-15; Dan vii. *passim*; Acts ix. 3, 6, 9; Rev. *passim*"—John Davenport, *An Apology for Mohammed and the Koran*.

† Stanley Lane-Poole.

Yethribites who had adopted the new religion felt assured of being able to give Mohammed an asylum in their city, and upwards of seventy of the converts of Yethrib led by Musaab repaired to Mecca with the pilgrims in the holy month of the thirteenth year of the Prophet's mission, to invite him to take up his abode in their city. Mohammed gave them a midnight meeting on the hill of Akabah. His uncle, Abbas, who, like the deceased Abu-Talib, took an affectionate interest in his welfare, though no convert to his doctrines, accompanied him to this secret conference, which he feared might lead him into danger. He entreated the pilgrims from Yethrib not to entice his nephew to their city until more able to protect him: warning them that their open adoption of the new Faith would bring all Arabia in arms against them. His warnings and entreaties were in vain: a solemn compact was made between the parties. The former pledge was repeated, and the following added:

We would defend him and his, even as we would our own women and children.*

And every one of the converts swore allegiance to Mohammed and to his God. Scarcely

* This is called the second Pledge of Akabah.

had the compact been concluded, when the voice of a Meccan, who had been watching the scene from a distance, reached their ears, striking a sudden panic into the hearts of the Moslems; but the words of the Prophet restored their presence of mind. Mohammed then singled out twelve from among them whom he designated as his delegates. The very next morning the Koreish manifested a knowledge of what had taken place in the night, and treated the new confederates with great harshness as they were departing from the city.

It was this early accession to the faith of Islam, and this timely aid proffered and subsequently afforded to Mohammed and his disciples, which procured for the Moslems of Yethrib the appellation of *Ansar*, or Helpers, by which they were ever afterwards distinguished.

After the departure of the Helpers, and the expiration of the holy month, the persecution of the Moslems was resumed with increased virulence, insomuch that Mohammed, seeing a crisis at hand, and being resolved to leave the city, advised his adherents generally to provide for their safety. For himself, he still lingered in Mecca with a few devoted followers, thinking it his honourable duty to stand by the last who remained.

Abu-Sufyan, of the rival branch of the Koreish and the implacable foe of Mohammed, was at this time governor of the city. He was both incensed and alarmed at the rapid growth of the new Faith, and held a meeting of the chiefs of the Koreish to devise some means of effectively putting a stop to it. Some advised that Mohammed should be banished; but it was objected that he might gain other tribes to his interest, or perhaps the people of Yethrib. Others proposed to wall him up in a dungeon until he died, but it was surmised that his friends might effect his escape. All these objections were raised by a violent and pragmatical old man, whom tradition has converted into a devil, breathing his malignant spirit into those present. At length, it was declared by Abu-Jahl that the only effectual check on the growing evil was to put Mohammed to death. To this all agreed, and as a means of sharing the odium of the deed, and withstanding the vengeance it might awaken among the relatives of the victim, it was arranged that a member of each family should plunge his sword into the body of Mohammed.

The proposal was accepted, and a number of noble youths were selected for the deed. As night advanced, the assassins

posted themselves round the Prophet's dwelling. Here they watched all night long, waiting to murder him when he should leave his house in the early dawn, peeping now and then through a crevice to make sure that he still lay on bed. But the warning of Divine Providence, which has often led many a good and pious soul to evade his enemies, also warned Mohammed of the danger. In order to keep the attention of the assassins fixed upon the bed, he put his green garment upon the devoted and faithful Ali, bade him lie on his bed, and escaped, like David, through the window. He repaired immediately to the house of Abu-Bakr, where they arranged for an instant flight. It was agreed that they should take refuge in a cave in Mount Thaur, about an hour's distance from Mecca, and there wait until they could proceed to Yethrib: in the meantime, the children of Abu-Bakr should secretly bring them food. They left Mecca while it was yet dark, making their way on foot by the light of the stars, and the day dawned as they found themselves at the foot of Mount Thaur. Here they hid themselves in the cavern.

While the Prophet was thus seeking safety, his murderers had burst open the door and rushed towards the couch. The sleeper

started up; but instead of Mohammed, Ali stood before them. Amazed and confounded, they demanded, "Where is Mohammed?" "Was I a keeper over him?" replied Ali sternly, and walked forth; nor did any one care to molest him.

The Koreish, enraged as they were, at the escape of their victim, proclaimed a reward of an hundred camels to any one who should bring them Mohammed alive or dead. Horsemen scoured the country. On more than one occasion, the danger approached so near that the heart of Abu-Bakr, though a very brave man, quaked with fear. "We are but two," said he. "Nay!" replied Mohammed, "we are three; be not distressed then, surely Allah is with us."* And He was with them. For three days the Prophet remained there with his faithful follower, but none of the enemies could find them out. On the fourth day, when they presumed the ardour of pursuit had abated, the fugitives ventured forth, and set out for Yethiib on camels, which a servant of Abu-Bakr had brought for them at night, by unfrequented paths. But even here the way was full of danger. They had not proceeded far before they were overtaken

*. Koran ix. 40.

by a wild and fierce warrior named Surakah. Again the heart of Abu-Bakr misgave him, and he cried out, "We are lost!" "Be not grieved," said the Prophet, "Allah will protect us." And He did protect them. As Surakah overtook Mohammed, his horse reared and fell with him at the Prophet's feet. Struck with sudden awe, he entreated the forgiveness of Mohammed, and made the profession of Islam.

The fugitives continued their journey without further interruption, until they arrived at Kuba, a hill about two miles from Yethrib. It was a favourite resort of the inhabitants of the city and remarkable for its beauty and salubrity. Here Mohammed alighted from his camel on a hot day of June 622 A. C. and remained four days, making converts from among its inhabitants *

About this time a renowned proselyte repaired to the Prophet at this village. This was Salman, the Persian. He is said to have

* Here the Prophet also decided to erect a place for prayer. It was the first Mosque of Islam. The Prophet himself laid the foundation-stone, and during his residence at Medinah used to visit it once a week on foot. It was originally a square building of very small size, but Othman the third Caliph of Islam enlarged it, in the direction of the minaret, making it 66 cubits each way.

been of a good family of a small place near Ispahan. Passing one day by a Christian church, he was so struck by the devotion of the people, and the solemnity of the worship, that he became disgusted with the idolatrous faith in which he had been brought up. He afterwards wandered about in the East, from city to city and convent to convent, until, so runs the tradition, an ancient monk of Amuria, in Syria, full of years and infirmities, told him of a Prophet who had arisen in Arabia to restore the pure faith of Abraham.

Shortly after this, Mohammed was joined by the faithful Ali, who had fled from Mecca, and journeyed on foot, hiding himself in the day and travelling only at night, lest he should fall into the hands of the Koreish. Within a few days came the rest of Abu-Bakr's family, together with the family of Mohammed, conducted by his faithful friend and freed-man Zeid.

The chief of the village was so charmed at the enthusiastic preaching of Mohammed and the sublimity of his teachings, that he requested the Prophet to stay, but the Apostle had his duty before him, and he entered Yethrib in the morning of Friday, 16th of Rabi I., corresponding with the 2nd of July 622 A. C., amidst universal

rejoicings.*

This was the memorable *Hijrat* (corrupted into *Hegira*), or the "Flight" of Mohammed, from which the Moslems date their Calendar.†

In concluding this chapter, we give in the words of Sir William Muir, a survey of the career of Mohammed at Mecca.

"Few and simple as the positive precepts of Mahomet upto this time appear, they had wrought a marvellous and a mighty work. Never since the days when primitive Christianity startled the world from its sleep, and waged a mortal combat with Heathenism,

* The citizens, in honour of the Prophet, changed the ancient name of their city to that of *Medinatum-Nabi*, or the City of the Prophet, afterwards contracted into *Medinah*, or the City, by way of pre-eminence.

† This Flight, or emigration, was not, as we have seen, the first, but it was the most remarkable inasmuch as it marked the greatest crisis in the history of the Prophet's mission, and originated the custom of referring to events as happening before or after the Flight; which Omar, when Caliph of Islam, converted into an official era. It dates, as is said above, from the 2nd of July, 622 A. C. Indeed the day that the Prophet left Mecca was the 4th of Rabi I, and he reached Kuba on the 12th, and entered Medinah on the 16th; but the *Hegira* begins two months before, from the 1st of Muharram, the first lunar month of the year. Omar made no alteration as to this, but anticipated the computation by 62 days, that he might commence his era from the beginning of that year in which the flight of the Prophet took place, and from which it took its name.

had men seen the like arousing of spiritual life, the like faith that suffered sacrifice and took joyfully the spoiling of goods for conscience sake.

“From time beyond memory, Mecca and the whole Peninsula had been steeped into spiritual torpor. The slight and transient influence of Judaism, Christianity, or Philosophy upon the Arab mind, had been but as the ruffling here and there the surface of a quiet lake;—all remained still and motionless below. The people were sunk in superstition, cruelty and vice. It was a common practice for the eldest son to marry his father’s widows inherited as property with the rest of the estate. Pride and poverty had introduced among them, as it has among the Hindus, the crime of female infanticide. Their religion consisted in gross idolatry, and their faith was rather the dark superstitious dread of unseen beings, whose goodness they sought to propitiate, and to avert their displeasure, than the belief in an over-ruling Providence. The Life to come and Retribution of good and evil were, as motives of action, practically unknown.

“Thirteen years before the Hegira, Mecca lay lifeless in this debased state. What a change those thirteen years had now produced? A band of several hundred per-

sons had rejected idolatry, adopted the worship of one great God, and surrendered themselves implicitly to the guidance of what they believed a revelation from Him;—praying to the Almighty with frequency and fervour, looking for pardon through His mercy, and striving to follow after good works, almsgiving, chastity and justice. They now lived under a constant sense of the Omnipotent power of God, and of His providential care over the minutest of their concerns. In all the gifts of nature, in every relation of life, at each turn of their affairs, individual or public, they saw His hand. And, above all, the new spiritual existence in which they joyed and gloried, was regarded as the mark of His especial grace, while the unbelief of their blinded fellow-citizens was the hardening stamp of His predestined reprobation. Mahomet was the minister of life to them,—the source under God of their new-born hopes; and to him they yielded a fitting and implicit submission.

“In so short a period, Mecca had, from this wonderful movement, been rent into two factions, which, unmindful of the old land-marks of tribe and family, were arranged in deadly opposition one against the other. The believers bore persecution with a patient and tolerant spirit. And though

it was their wisdom so to do, the credit of a magnanimous forbearance may be freely accorded to them. One hundred men and women, rather than abjure the precious faith, had abandoned their homes, and sought refuge, till the storm should be overpast, in Abyssinian exile. And now even a larger number, with the Prophet himself, emigrated from their fondly-loved city, with its sacred temple,—to them the holiest spot on earth,—and fled to Medina. There the samewonder-working charm had within two or three years prepared for them a brotherhood ready to defend the Prophet and his followers with their blood. Jewish truth had long sounded in the ears of the men of Medina, but it was not till they heard the spirit-stirring strains of the Arabian Prophet, that they too awoke from their slumber, and sprang suddenly into a new and earnest life.”*

NOTE.

Professor Wilson gives the following method for ascertaining the Mohammedan and Christian years :

“Multiply the Hegira year by 2977, the difference between 100 solar and as many lunar Mohammedan years ; divide the product by 100, and deduct the quotient from the Hegira year ; add to the result 621 569 (the decimal being the equivalent of the 15th of July, plus 12 days for the change of the Calen-

* Muir, *The Life of Mahomet*, vol. II pp. 269-71.

dar); and the quotient will be the Christian year from the date at which the Mohammedan year begins; thus, Hegira 1269 \times 2977 = 37778, which divided by 100 = 377.78, and $1269 - 377.78 = 1231.22$; this $+ 621.569 = 1852.791$, the decimals corresponding to 9 months and 15 days, i.e., the 15th of October, which is the commencement of the Hegira year 1269. The reverse formula for finding the corresponding Hegira year to a given Christian year, is thus laid down. Subtract 622 from the current year, multiply the result by 1.0307; cut off two decimals and add .46; the sum will be the year, which, when it has a surplus decimal, requires the addition of 1. thus $1852 - 622 = 1230$; $1230 \times 1.0307 = 1267.761$, $1267.76 + .46 = 1268.22$; add therefore 1, and we have the equivalent Hegira year 1269."*

* Professor H. H. Wilson, *Glossary of Terms*. Quoted from F. P. Hughes, *Dictionary of Islam*, Art. Hijrah. London 1895.

CHAPTER III.

MOHAMMED AT MEDINAH.

MOHAMMED soon found himself at the head of a numerous and powerful sect in Medinah, made up partly of those of his disciples who had fled with him from Mecca, and were thence called *Muhajirin*, or Emigrants, and partly of those of the inhabitants of the place who joined the Faith and were called *Ansar*, or Helpers of Islam in its hour of trial. Most of these latter came from the powerful tribes of Aus and Khazraj; who, though descended from two brothers, had for the last 120 years distracted Medinah by their inveterate and mortal feuds. They were now united in the bonds of faith. In order to unite the Helpers of Medinah and the Emigrants of Mecca in closer bonds, Mohammed established a brotherhood between them which linked them together in weal and woe.

The tribe of Khazraj was very much under the influence of a chief named Abdullah, son of Ubbay, who was also to be made a king, when the arrival of Mohammed and the excitement caused by his doctrines gave the popular feeling a new direction, and obliged

him and his followers to make a nominal profession of Islam. But ever ready as they were to turn against the Moslems, they were a source of considerable danger to the new-born Commonwealth, and were stigmatised as *Munafikin*, or the Hypocrites.

Being now enabled publicly to exercise his faith and preach his doctrines, Mohamed proceeded to erect a mosque. Two brothers who owned the land on which it was proposed to build the mosque offered it as a free gift; but as they were orphans the Prophet actually bought it, and the money was paid by Abu-Bakr. The building was simple in form and structure, suited to the unostentatious religion he preached. The walls were of brick and earth: the trunks of the plam-trees recently felled served as pillars to support the roof, which was framed of their branches and thatched with their leaves. A portion of the building was set apart for those who had no homes of their own.

Everything in this humble mosque was conducted with the greatest simplicity. At night it was lighted up by splinters of the date tree; and it was some time before lamps and oil were introduced. Mohammed stood on the ground and preached.

Afterwards he had a pulpit erected to which he ascended by three steps, so as to be elevated above the congregation. The Prophet preached and prayed on the pulpit, sometimes sitting, sometimes standing and leaning on a staff.

The Teacher of Islam preached in a thousand varied ways universal love and brotherhood as the emblem of the love borne towards God :—

“God will say on the day of resurrection, ‘O son of man! I was sick, and thou didst not visit Me;’ the man will say, ‘O my Lord! how could I visit Thee when Thou art the Lord of all the world?’ God will say, ‘Didst thou not know that such an one of My servants was sick, and thou didst not visit him? Didst thou not know that if hadst visited him, thou hadst surely found Me with him?’

“God will say, ‘O son of man! I asked food of thee, and thou didst not feed Me?’ The man will say, ‘O my Lord! how could I feed Thee when Thou art the Lord of all the world?’ God will say, ‘Didst thou not know that such an one of My servants asked food of thee, and thou didst not feed him? Didst thou not know that if thou hadst fed him, thou hadst surely found that with Me?’

“God will say, ‘O son of man! I asked

drink of thee, and thou didst not give Me to drink ?' The man will say, ' O my Lord ! how could I give Thee to drink when Thou art the Lord of all the world ?' God will say, ' Such an one of My servants asked drink of thee, and thou didst not give him to drink ; verily, if thou hadst given him to drink, thou hadst surely found that with Me.' " *

" God will not be merciful to him who is not merciful to men." †

" The Merciful God is merciful to those who are merciful : be merciful to those who are in the earth, so that He who is in heaven may be merciful to you." ‡

" All creation is the family of God, and of all creation the most beloved of God is he who does most good to His family " §

" No servant (of God) really believes until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself." ||

" Be not inquisitive, nor overhear anything, nor dispute anything with another, nor envy one another, nor hate one another, nor leave one another in the lurch ; but be ye all servants of God and brothers to one another, even as God has commanded you." ¶

* *Sayings*, 275.
§ *Ibid.*, 269.

† *Ibid.*, 511.
|| *Ibid.*, 214.

‡ *Ibid.*, 508.
¶ *Ibid.*, 904.

“God is always ready to help His servant so long as the servant is ready to help his brother.”*

In one of his sermons there is the following apologue on the subject of charity:—

“When God created the earth, it shook and trembled; then God laid stable mountains upon it, and it rested. At this the angels marvelled and said, ‘O our Lord! hast Thou created a stronger creation than the mountains?’ God said, ‘Yes, iron; for it breaks them.’ They said, ‘And hast Thou created a stronger creation than iron?’ He said, ‘Yes, fire; for it melts it.’ ‘And hast Thou created a stronger creation than fire?’ they asked. ‘Yes, water; for it quenches it.’ ‘And hast Thou created a stronger creation than water?’ ‘Yes,’ said God, ‘the wind; for it sets it in motion.’ They said, ‘And hast Thou created a stronger creation than the wind?’ God said, ‘Yes; the child of man, when he gives with his right hand and hides it from his left; (verily he overcomes all).”†

His definition of charity embraced the wide circle of kindness. “Every good work,” he would say, “is charity”‡ “Thy smiling in thy brother’s face is charity; thy bidding what is good is charity; thy forbid-

* *Sayings*, 1017.

† *Ibid.*, 109.

‡ *Ibid.*, 87.

ding what is wrong is charity; thy putting a man in an unknown land in the right road is charity for thee; thy assisting a man who has a defect in the eye is charity for thee; thy removing stones and thorns and bones from the road is charity for thee; and thy emptying the bucket into the bucket of thy brother is charity for thee." *

"A man's substance in the hereafter is the good he does in this life to his fellow-creatures. When he dies, the angels say, 'What has he sent on before him?' and the son of man says, 'What has he left behind?'" †

He would often tell his disciples: "Despise not anything good, and speak to thy brother with an open countenance; verily, that is of good acts and kindnesses; and if a man revile thee and reproach thee for what he knows in thee, do thou not reproach him for what thou knowest in him, so that thou mayest have the reward thereof, and the sin thereof be upon him alone." ‡

"O Prophet!" said one of his disciples, "my mother is dead; what would be the best almsgiving for her?" "Water," replied the Prophet, bethinking himself of the panting heat of the desert. "Dig a well for her,

* *Sayings*, 88.

† *Ibid.*, 146.

‡ *Ibid.*, 10.

and give water to the thirsty.”* The man digged a well in his mother’s name, and said, “This well is for my mother, that its rewards may reach her soul.”

“Charity of the tongue also,” says Washington Irving, “that most important and least cultivated of charities, was likewise earnestly inculcated by Mahomet.” Abu-Jaria, an inhabitant of Basrah, came to Medinah, and being persuaded of the truth of Mohammed’s mission, entreated of him some great rule of conduct. “Abuse no one,” said Mohammed. “From that day,” says Abu-Jaria, “I never abused any free-man or slave, camel or sheep.”†

The rules of Islam extended to the courtesies of life :—

“Make a *salam* (salutation) to a house on entering and leaving it”‡ “Salute your wives and children.”§ “Return the salute of friends and acquaintances, and wayfarers on the road.” “He who rides must be the first to make the salute to him who walks; he who walks to him who is sitting; a small party to the large party, and the young to the old.”||

Sayings, 104

Cf. *Koran*, xxiv 61, iv. 86

† *Ibid*, 10

§ *Sayings*, 834.

|| *Ibid*, 837.

CHAPTER IV.

THE HOSTILITY OF THE KOREISH AND THE JEWS.

THE first thing that Mohammed did soon after his arrival at Medinah was to unite in a common cause the varied and conflicting elements of the city and its suburbs. And with this view he made treaties of neutrality with the Jews of Medinah and the surrounding tribes of Damrah (who were connected with Mecca) and Mudlij (a tribe of Kinanah related to the Koreish), in anticipation of any impending danger from the Koreish, who on a similar occasion had pursued them to Abyssinia. He also gave a charter to the people of Medinah clearly defining their rights and obligations. It ran thus:—

In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate. Given by Mohammed, the son of Abdullah and Apostle of God, to his followers, and all individuals, of whatever origin, who have made common cause with them: all these shall form one nation . . . The state of peace or war shall be common to all: no one shall have the right of concluding peace with, or declaring war against, the enemies of his co-religionists. The Jews who attach themselves to our Commonwealth shall be protected from all insults and vexations; they shall have an equal right with our own people to our assistance and good offices, the Jews of the various branches of Aul, Najjar, Haith, Jashm,

Thaalabah, Aus, and all others domiciled in Medinah, shall form with the Moslems one composite nation; they shall practise their religion as freely as the Moslems; the clients and allies of the Jews shall enjoy the same security and freedom, the guilty shall be pursued and punished; the Jews shall join the Moslems in defending Medinah against all enemies. .

. . Moslems shall hold in abhorrence every man guilty of crime, injustice or disorder; no one shall uphold the culpable though he were his nearest kin. .

All disputes between those who accept this Charter shall be referred, under God, to Mohammed.

The people of Medinah, the Jews of the tribes of Nadir, Koreizah, and Kainukaa, gratefully accepted its terms.

In fact, the Moslems after suffering so long such bitter persecutions at Mecca, had at length got an asylum of peace at Medinah, where they had very little desire left to entertain any idea of commencing hostilities or undergoing once more the horrors of war, and were glad enough to live in peace, and enjoy the blessings of their new religion without any disturbance, if possibly they could do so.

But the relentless Koreish, whose hostility towards the small band of Moslem refugees to Abyssinia had been so great, seeing that the persecuted had left, almost all of them, their native land for a distant city out of their (approach) except by a military expedition, and losing Mohammed for whose assassination they had tried their utmost,

as well as upon hearing of the reception, treatment, religious freedom, and brotherly help the Moslems had received and enjoyed at Medinah, could not subdue their ferocious animosity against the exiles; and, accordingly, they took every strong and hostile measure to attack the fugitives at Medinah.

Kurz, son of Jabir, one of the marauding chiefs of the Koreish, fell upon some of the camels and flocks of Medinah while feeding in a plain a few miles from the city and carried them off.

Still there was no hostile response from the Moslems.

It was not till the second year of the general expulsion of the Moslems from Mecca, when the Prophet was greatly concerned on receiving the news of the advance of the Koreish, with a large army of 1000 strong, mounted on 700 camels and 100 horses, upon Medinah, that the Moslems prepared for battle. Medinah is 276 miles, or 12 stages, to the north of Mecca. The Koreish had already marched fully armed. What was to be done for the preservation of the poor Moslems and the men of Medinah who had made common cause with them? There was no time to lose. What was to be done must be done instantly and with effective measures. If the Koreish (have) the

better, what would be the fate of the Moslems but a universal massacre? Such were the thoughts of the Teacher of the Moslems. In this extremity comes the following strict injunction from Him whose apostle he was:—

“(O Prophet!) give glad tidings to those who do good. Verily God will ward off (evil) from those who believe; verily, God loves not any perfidious, ungodly fellow.

“Permission is given to those who are fought against to fight, for that they have been wronged; and, verily, God has the power to help them—who have been turned out of their homes wrongfully, only for that they said, Our Lord is God!

“And if it were not for God's repelling some men by others, surely monasteries, and churches, and synagogues, and (all) places of worship, wherein the name of God is frequently mentioned, would have been utterly destroyed.

“And God will certainly help him who helps Him; verily God is strong, mighty; those who, if He give them power in the earth will observe prayer, and give alms, and bid what is just, and forbid what is wrong. And to God is the end of (all) affairs.” *

* Koran, xxii. 37 41.

“And fight in the cause of God with those who fight with you; but transgress not; verily, God loves not the transgressors.

“And kill them wherever ye find them, and turn them out from whence they would turn you out; for mischief-making is worse than slaughter. . . . But if they desist (from fighting with you, fight ye not with them), for verily God is forgiving, compassionate.

“And fight with them until there be no (more) mischief-making and the judgement of God come; but if they desist, then let there be no hostility, except against the wrong-doers.”*

But the Prophet would not stand up for war, in self-defence as it was, against his persecutors, till it occurred to him that he was head of the State as well as of the Church, and as in duty bound to his subjects, had to defend Medinah from any aggressive attacks of the Koreish; his conscience smote him, and then came the following message:—

“Enjoined upon you is war; but it is hateful to you. Yet it may be, that ye hate a thing while it is good for you; and it may be, that ye love a thing while it is bad for you; for God knows, and ye—ye do not

* Koran, ii. 190-93.

know."*

"Will ye not fight against a people who . . . begin (the fight) themselves?†

"And what ails you that ye fight not in the cause of God, and for the weak among men, women and children, who say, Our Lord! bring us forth from this city of wrong-doing people, and give us from before Thee a patron, and give us from before Thee a helper."‡

In an instant all the Moslems were ready for battle. But they were only 300 in number, and the Koreish had already marched 6 stages from Mecca and were midway between Mecca and Medinah. Mohammed proposed to check their advance by a rapid march, and set out from Medinah with his little band of the faithful.

After marching three stages, the Moslems were obliged to leave the main-road to Mecca, which they had been following, when their scouts brought them (notice) that the Koreish leaving the main-road to the right, had turned towards the Red Sea. The Koreish, it appears, meant thus to get Mohammed and his followers nearer Mecca and then revenge themselves after their own cruel manner. Mohammed at once perceived

* Koran, ii. 216

† Ibid., ix. 13.

‡ Ibid., iv. 75

what they meant, and leaving the main-road to the left turned towards the Red Sea, and entered the fertile valley watered by the brook Badr.

Here Mohanmed posted his little army on a rising ground, with water at the foot of it. The vanguard of the enemy were surprised to find the Moslems where they (did) least expect^{ed} them.

They now sounded alarm. The hearts of the Moslems failed them, and they were dismayed at the thought of such an overwhelming force; but their Prophet bade them be of good cheer, for God had promised them an easy victory.

When the main body of the enemy approached with the sound of trumpets, and Mohammed saw that he could not avoid fighting, he commended himself and his followers to God's protection, and raised his hands to heaven, crying out with great earnestness:—

“My God! My God! forget not Thy promise of assistance; if this little party be cut off, Thou wilt no more be worshipped on earth.”

And he continued to repeat these words till, says his chronicler, his cloak fell from off his back.

Three Koreish warriors now advanced

in front, and defied the bravest of the Moslems to single combat. Three warriors of Medinah stepped forward and accepted their challenge; but they cried, "Nol let the renegades of our own city of Mecca advance, if they dare." Upon this, Hamzah and Ali, the uncle and cousin of Mohammed, and Obeidullah, son of Harith, undertook the fight, and came out conquerors; but Obeidullah presently died of the wounds he had received in the fight.

The battle soon became general. At one time the fortune of the field wavered, but the Prophet's appeal to his people decided the fate of the battle. "It was a stormy winter day. A piercing blast swept across the valley." It seemed, says the pious chronicler, as if the angels of heaven were warring for the Moslems, and driving the faithless enemy before them in confusion.*

In the shock of battle which ensued Abu-Jahl, who was urging his horse into the thickest of the conflict, received the blow of a scimeter in the thigh which brought him to the ground.

The Koreish now gave way and fled. Forty-nine remained dead on the field, and

* Cf. Koran, viii. 9, iii. 13, 123-7.

nearly the same number were taken prisoners. Fourteen of the Moslems were slain.

The question now arose how to dispose of the prisoners. Omar, that most fiery warrior, was for striking off their heads, as professed patrons of infidelity; but Abu-Bakr, a man of milder disposition, advised that they should be (given) up for ransom. Mohammed, in observing the extreme severity of the one and the gentleness of the other, remarked that Omar was like Noah who prayed to God for the utter extirpation of the wicked ante-deluvians, while Abu-Bakr was like Abraham who interceded for offenders. He, however, decided on the side of mercy. Several of the prisoners who were poor were liberated on merely making an oath never again to take up arms against the Moslems. The rest were detained as hostages for a time, after which they were either ransomed or liberated on making the same oath.*

* Only one of them was afterwards put to death. His name was Abdul Uzza. He had been one of the bitterest persecutors of the Moslems at Mecca. Having fallen into the hands of the Moslems at Badr, he besought Mohammed to release him by way of compassion for his five daughters. Mohammed granted him his life and liberty without ransom on condition that he would never again bear up arms against the Moslems or their Prophet. As soon, however, as he

Sir William Muir thus speaks of the treatment of the prisoners of Badr at the hands of the Moslems :

“In pursuance of Mahomet’s commands, the citizens of Medina and such of the refugees as possessed houses, received the prisoners and treated them with much consideration. ‘Blessings be on the men of Medina!’ said these prisoners in later days. ‘They made us ride, while they themselves walked; they gave us wheaten bread to eat, when there was little of it, contenting themselves with dates.’ ”*

The moderation and magnanimity of the Prophet in thus disposing of the “prisoners of war,” instead of reducing them to slavery as was the custom, caused some discontent among the more impulsive of his followers, in whose hearts the insults and injuries of the Koreish yet rankled, and they begged hard of Mohammed to slay all the prisoners indiscriminately; which led to the promulgation of the following ordinance:—

“And when ye meet the unbelievers in battle, strike off (their) necks. until ye have

had reached home, he exhorted the Arabs of his tribe to make war upon the Moslems, and himself joined the invading army of Mecca. This time he was caught at Hamra and duly executed by the Moslems.

* Muir, *The Life of Mahomet*, vol. iii. p 122.

overpowered them, and (of the rest) bind fast the bonds; then either (give them) a free dismissal afterwards, or (exact) a ransom."*

Before the army returned to Medinah there was a division of the spoil. For the present, however, Mohammed ordered that the whole should be equally divided among all those engaged in the enterprise. This caused great murmur among the troops; and, with a view to prevent any future quarrel over spoils acquired in war, Mohammed published a special ordinance by which the distribution of the spoils was left to the discretion of the chief of the commonwealth, a fifth being reserved for the public treasury for the support of the poor and indigent.†

Soon after his return to Medinah, Mohammed tried every possible means of obtaining a pacific solution of the difficulty which had arisen between the Moslems and their enemies, the Koreish of Mecca, to avert war and its horrors. He repeatedly informed the Koreish that if they desisted from attacking the Moslems they would be forgiven

“(Ye people of Mecca!) if ye wish for a

* Koran, xlvii. 4.

† Ibid, viii 41.

decision (of the matter between us), now is the decision come to you; and if ye desist (from attacking the Moslems), it will be better for you; but if ye return (to it), we will return too; and your forces shall avail not at all, though they be many, for that God is with the faithful *

"Say to the unbelievers that if they desist (from attacking the Moslems), what is already past shall be forgiven them; but if they return (to attack them), the example of those of old is already before them."†

But all this to no effect. As soon as the Koreish prisoners had returned home, Abu-Sufyan issued forth from Mecca with 200 fleet horsemen, each with a sack of meal at his saddle-bow, the scanty provisions of of an Arab for a foray. As he sallied forth he vowed neither to anoint his head, perfume his beard, nor indulge himself otherwise until he had avenged himself on Mohammed and his followers. Scouring the country to within three miles of Medinah, he slew two of the Prophet's followers, ravaged the fields, and burnt the date-trees. As soon, however, as the Moslems sallied forth from Medinah, Abu-Sufyan, regard-

* Koran, viii. 19

† Ibid., 38

less of his vow, did not await their approach, but turned bridle and fled. His troop clattered after him, throwing off their sacks of meal in the hurry of their flight; whence this scampering affair was derisively called by the Moslems *Ghazawat-us-Sawik*, the expedition of the meal-bags.*

Arabian writers record an imminent risk of the Prophet while yet in the field on this occasion. He was one day sleeping alone at the foot of a tree, at a distance from his camp, when he was awakened by a noise, and beheld Duthur, a hostile warrior, standing over him with a drawn sword. "O Mohammed!" cried he, "who is there now to save thee?" "God!" replied the Prophet. The wild Bedouin was suddenly awed, and dropped his sword, which was instantly seized upon by Mohammed. Brandishing the weapon, he exclaimed in turn, "Who is there now to save thee, O man?" "Alas, no one!" replied the soldier. "Then learn to be merciful." So saying, he returned the sword. The warrior's heart was overcome; he acknowledged Mohammed as the Prophet of God and embraced the faith.

The defeat of the Koreish at Badr was felt as keenly by the Jews as by the

* It took place in the month of Dhul-Kaadah A. H. 4 (April, A. C. 626)

Meccans. All the concessions made by Mohammed to this people had proved fruitless; they not only remained stubborn unbelievers, but treated Mohammed and his doctrines with ridicule. Asma, the daughter of Marwan, a Jewish poetess, wrote satires against him and his followers. Abu-Afak likewise indulged in satire against the Prophet. Kaab, son of Ashraf, another Jewish poet of the tribe of Nadir, repaired to Mecca after the battle of Badr. By his satires against the Prophet and his followers, by his elegies on the Meccans who had fallen at Badr, he endeavoured to stir up the Koreish to vengeance. His acts were openly directed against the commonwealth of which he was a member. He belonged to a tribe which had entered into a compact with the Moslems, and pledged itself for the internal as well as the external safety of the State. Another Jew of the same tribe, Abu-Rafe Salam, son of Abul-Hukeik, was equally wild and bitter against the Moslems. He inhabited, with a faction of his tribe, the territories of Kheibar, four or five days' journey to the north-west of Medinah. Detesting Mohammed and his followers, he made use of every endeavour to excite the neighbouring Arab tribes, such as the Suleim and the Ghatafan, against

them. Seditious and unruly, the tribe of Kainukaa was also noted for the extreme laxity of its morals. One day a young girl of the country came to their market to sell milk. The Jewish youths insulted her grossly. A Moslem who was passing by took the part of the girl, and in the fray which ensued the author of the outrage was killed; whereupon the entire body of the Jews present rose and slaughtered the Moslem. The Moslems of the neighbouring quarter, enraged at the murder of their compatriot flew to arms, and many were killed on both sides. At the first news of the riots, Mohammed hastened to the spot and by his presence succeeded in restraining the fury of his followers. He at once saw what the end would be of all these seditions and disorders if allowed to have their way. The Jews had ^{openly} and knowingly infringed the terms of the compact. He considered it an absolute duty to put a stop to all this with a firm hand. Accordingly, he at once proceeded to the quarter of the tribe of Kainukaa, and required them to forgo their lawless practices or to vacate Medinah. Their reply to this was as follows: "O Mohammed! be not elated with the victory over thy people (the Koreish). Thou hast had to do with men ignorant of

the art of war. If thou wilt have any dealings with us, we will show that we are men." They then remained obstinately shut up in their stronghold, and set Mohammed's counsel at defiance. But the safety of the State required that they should be compelled to surrender, and accordingly, siege was laid to their stronghold without loss of time. After fifteen days they surrendered. Justice required that they should be severely punished, but Mohammed simply banished them and ordered two of them to be executed.

"The execution of the half-dozen marked Jews is generally called assassination, because a Muslim was sent secretly to kill each of the criminals. The reason is almost too obvious to need explanation. There were no police or law-courts, or even courts-martial, at Medina; some one of the followers of Mohammad must therefore be the executor of the sentence of death, and it was better it should be done quietly, as the executing of a man openly before his clan would have caused a brawl and more bloodshed and retaliation, till the whole city had become mixed upon in the quarrel. If 'secret assassination' is the word for such deeds, secret assassination was a necessary part of the internal government of Medina.

"The men must be killed, and best in that way." "In saying this," continues the writer we are quoting, "I assume that Mohammad was cognisant of the deed, and that it was not merely a case of private vengeance; but in several instances the evidence that traces these executions to Mohammad's order is either entirely wanting or is too doubtful to claim our credence"*

It was about this time that Mohammed was allied to Hafsah, the daughter of Omar. This lady had lost her husband† at the battle of Badr. Omar offered his daughter's hand to Othman, and, upon his declining the honour, to Abu-Bakr. He also met the offer with a refusal‡ Omar was indignant at what he considered a slight to himself. At one time this threatened to engulf the whole Moslem community in a serious riot, for such was the strong sensitive nature of the Arabs. In this extremity, Mohammed offered to marry Hafsah.

As the power of Mohammed increased in Medinah, the hostility of the Koreish in Mecca augmented in virulence. Abu-Sufyan

* *Selections from the Kur-an*, by E. W. Lane, with an Introduction by Stanley Lane Poole. Introd., p. xlv. Trubner & Co., London, 1879

† His name was Khunels, an early convert to Islam.

‡ Ibn Omar in Bukhari and Nasai.

held command in the sacred city, and was incessantly urged to warfare by his wife Hind, whose fierce spirit could find no rest until the death of her father, brother, and uncle, who had fallen at Badr, was avenged. Ikramah also, a son of Abu-Jahl, who inherited his father's hatred of the Prophet, clamoured for vengeance. In the third year of the Hegira, therefore, the year after the battle of Badr, Abu-Sufyan took the field at the head of 3,000 men, most of them Koreish, though there were also Arabs of the tribes of Kinanah and Tahamah; 700 were mailed warriors and 200 horsemen. Ikramah was one of the captains, as also was Khalid son of Walid, a warrior of indomitable valour, who afterwards rose to great renown. The banners were borne in front by the sons and descendants of Abd-ud-Dar, a branch of the Koreish.

In the rear of the host followed the vindictive Hind with the principal women of Mecca, relatives of those slain at Badr, stimulating the troops with the sound of timbrels and warlike chants.

Abbas, the uncle of Mohammed, who still resided in Mecca, seeing that destruction threatened his nephew should that army come upon him by surprise, sent

secretly a swift messenger to inform him of his danger. Mohammed received the message at Kuba; and immediately hastened back to Medinah to call a council of his principal adherents.

The Meccans had by this time taken up a well-chosen position to the north-east of Medinah, where only the hill of Ohad and a valley separated them from the city. From this safe vantage-ground they ravaged the fields and fruit-groves of the Medinites. Forced by the enthusiasm of his followers and by their fury at the destruction of their property, Mohammed marched out of Medinah with scarce a thousand men; one hundred only had cuirasses, and there were but two horsemen.* Mohammed ordered his followers not to commence the fight but to stand firm and maintain their position. Above all, the archers were to keep to their posts, let the battle go as it might, lest the cavalry should fall upon his rear.

The horsemen of the left wing, led by Ikramah, now attempted to take the Moslems in flank, but were repulsed by the archers, and retreated in confusion. Upon

* Just as the battle commenced Abdullah, son of Ubbay, withdrew himself and his followers (nearly 300 in number), thus reducing the Moslem army to about 700 men.

this, Hamzah rushed down with his forces upon the centre. The enemies were staggered by the shock. Seven standard-bearers of the children of Abd-ud-Dar were one after the other struck down, and the centre began to yield. The Moslem archers, thinking the victory secure, forgot the commands of Mohammed, and leaving their post, dispersed in search of spoil. Khalid, one of the Koreish, at once perceived their error and rallying the horse, fell on the rear of the Moslems. The infantry of the Koreish also turned, and the Moslem troops, taken both in rear and front, had to renew the battle at fearful odds. The efforts of the Koreish were now principally directed towards Mohammed, who was surrounded by his faithful followers. In the midst of the melee a stone from a sling struck Mohammed on the mouth, cutting his lip and knocking out one of his front teeth ; he was also wounded in the face by an arrow. Hamzah too was transfixed by the lance of Waksah, an Ethiopian slave, who had been promised his freedom if he could revenge the death of his master slain at the battle of Badr. Musanab also, who bore the standard of Mohammed, was laid low, and Ali seized the banner, and bore it aloft amidst the storm of battle. The Moslems now began to fly in despair,

bearing with them Abu-Bakr and Omar, who were severely wounded. Ali also, who had answered the first call of defiance of the Koreish, was severely wounded. At the close of the fight, he fetched water in his shield from the hollow of a rock, with which he bathed the Prophet's face and wounds.

But the Koreish were too exhausted to follow up their advantage, and contented themselves with plundering and barbarously mutilating the Moslem dead. Hind and her female companions were foremost in the savage work of vengeance; and the ferocious woman tore out and devoured the heart of Hamzah, and made bracelets and necklaces of the ears and noses of the dead. Abu-Sufyan, her husband, bore a part of the mangled body upon his lance as a trophy of the battle.

The barbarities practised by the Koreish on the slain created among the Moslems a feeling of bitter (exasperation.) They begged Mohammed to allow them to inflict like outrage on seventy of the enemy when in their power; upon which the following verses of the Koran were published:—

If ye take vengeance, take a vengeance equal to the wrong that has been done you; but if ye endure patiently, surely best it will be for the enduring. Endure then patiently.

And grieve not thou over them, neither be thou

in a worry at what they plot Verily God is with those who fear (to do wrong) and who do good " *

And from that day the horrible practice of mutilation which still prevailed among the Jews, Christians, and other nations of the world, was totally forbidden to the Moslems. The Prophet also forbade his followers to mourn for the dead by cutting off their hair, rending their garments, and other modes of lamentation usual among the Arabs; but he allowed them to weep for the dead; "for," he said, "tears relieve the overladen heart."

Soon after his return to Medinah, Mohammed took to wife Hind,[†] daughter of Omeiyah, a man of great influence. She had fled with her husband to Abyssinia and was now a widow. She was of an extremely jealous disposition, and neither Abu-Bakr nor Omar would accept her hand. In her distress, she requested Mohammed to marry her, which he did.

Mohammed the Prophet was strictly just in the exercise of his power as magistrate, and kept the equilibrium between all contending parties irrespective of religion.

* Koran, xvi. 126-8.

† She is better known as Ummi Salamah, or mother of Salamah.

Toma, of the sons of Zafar, one of Mohammed's disciples, stole a coat of mail from his neighbour, Kitadah, in a bag of meal, and hid it at a Jew's named Zeid. Toma being suspected, the coat of mail was demanded of him, but he denied all knowledge of it. They then followed the track of the meal, which had run out through a hole in the bag, to the Jew's house, and there seized it, accusing him of the theft; but the Jew produced witnesses of his own religion to prove that he had it of Toma. The sons of Zafar then came to Mohammed and, urging the innocence of Toma, desired him to defend "his companion's reputation" and condemn the Jew. But Mohammed saw through their prejudice the facts of the case, and condemned Toma; whereupon the sons of Zafar departed and lapsed into idolatry.

The incident is thus referred to in the Koran :

Verily We have sent down to thee the book with truth that thou mayest judge between men by what God shows thee therein. And be not an advocate for those who deal falsely; rather ask pardon of God; verily, God is forgiving, compassionate.

And plead not for those who deal falsely among themselves, verily, God loves not him who is deceitful, criminal.

They hide themselves from men, but they cannot hide themselves from God, for He is with them when they brood by night over sayings which please Him not, and God encompasses what they do.

Here ye are they who plead for them in the life of this world, but who will plead for them with God on the day of resurrection, or who will be a guardian over them?

But whoso does evil, or wrongs himself, and then asks pardon of God, shall find God forgiving, compassionate.

And whoso acquires a sin, he only acquires it against himself. And God is knowing, wise.

And whoso acquires a fault or a sin, and then throws it on the innocent, shall bear (the guilt of) calumny and a manifest sin.

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But whoso severs himself from the apostle, after the guidance is made plain to him, and follows a way other than that of the faithful, We will turn him to what he is turned, and will cast him into hell; and evil the journey (thither)!”*

The Jewish tribes of Adal and Karah sent a deputation to Mohammed professing an inclination to embrace the faith, and requesting missionaries to teach them its doctrines. He accordingly sent six disciples to accompany the deputation; but on the journey, while reposing by the brook Raji, the deputies fell upon the unsuspecting Moslems, slew four of them, and carried the other two to Mecca, where they gave them up to the Koreish, who put them to death in a most cruel manner. A similar act of treachery was practised by the people of the province of Nejd. Pretending to be Moslems, they sought help from Mohammed

* Koran, iv. 105-112, 115.

against their enemies. He sent seventy Moslems to their aid; these were attacked by the tribe of Suleim near the brook Maunah, about four days' journey from Medinah, and slain to a man. One of the Moslems, Amru son of Omeiyah, escaped the carnage and made for Medinah. On his way he met two unarmed Jews of the tribe of Amir, who were travelling under a safe-conduct of the Prophet, and mistaking them for enemies he killed them. When Mohammed heard of this he was sorely grieved. He instantly ordered the collection of the blood-money from the Moslems and the people who had accepted the Charter. The Jews of the tribes of Nadir and Koreizah were also bound to contribute towards this payment. Mohammed himself, accompanied by some of his disciples, proceeded to the tribe of Nadir, and asked for their contributions. A repast was spread in the open air before the mansion of the chief. Whilst sitting with his back to the wall of the house, he suspected treachery; it was arranged that he would be crushed by a mill-stone, flung from the terraced roof of the house. Without intimating his knowledge of the treason, which would have precipitated matters, he left the company abruptly, and hastened back to Medinah.

Such seditious and unruliness could not be tolerated, ~~and~~ accordingly, Mohammed ordered them to leave the country within ten days. Relying on the support of Abdullah son of Ubbay, the tribe of Nadir returned a defiant answer. Siege was laid to their stronghold, and after fifteen days they surrendered. They were allowed, however, like the tribe of Keinokaa, to take all their moveable property with them, excepting only their arms. They destroyed their houses before leaving them,* lest they should afford a shelter or refuge to the followers of Mohammed. *before*

Some time ~~ago~~^{before}, Mohammed had married his friend and freedman Zeid to his own cousin Zeinab, daughter of Jahsh. Like himself, she was descended from two of the noblest families of Arabia. Proud of her birth, she felt humiliated at her marriage with a freedman, and mutual aversion soon culminated in disgust. At last Zeid came to the decision not to live any longer with her, and with this determination he went to Mohammed, and expressed his intention of being divorced. "Why," demanded Mohammed, "hast thou found any fault in her?" "No," replied Zeid, "I can no longer

*Koran, lix. 2.

live with her." Mohammed then peremptorily said, "Go, keep thy wife to thyself, and fear God."* But Zeid was not moved from his purpose; and a few days after he divorced Zeinab, in spite of all the exhortations of Mohammed. When the Prophet heard of it he was sorely grieved, more especially as it was he who had arranged the marriage of Zeid with Zeinab, although the relatives of the latter were averse to it and had remonstrated with him against the marriage of a high-born lady with one who only the other day had been a slave.† Zeinab now went back to her father, who offered his daughter's hand to some of the chief men of the city; but none would marry the divorced wife of a slave. Mohammed advised Zeid and Zeinab to be reconciled, but to no effect. At last Mohammed married Zeinab, and thus escaped the taunts of her relatives, who looked upon him as the one who had brought about the present disgrace upon their family ‡

* Koran, xxxiii 37.

† Ibid 36

‡ The story told by Tabari and his followers with a certain degree of exaggeration of the marriage of Zeinab with the Prophet, is from the beginning to the end all false and malicious. Mohammed knew Zeinab from her infancy: she was his cousin; and he had himself arranged her marriage with Zeid, he might have

Among the Arab tribes which took up arms against Mohammed after his defeat at Ohad, were the tribe of Mustalik, a powerful branch of the Koreish. Mohammed received intelligence of their gathering in warlike guise under Harith near the walls of Muraisi, nine stages from Medinah and within five miles of the Red Sea. He immediately took the field at the head of a chosen band of the faithful, accompanied by members of the tribe of Khazraj. By a rapid movement he surprised the enemy; Harith was killed at the onset by the flight shot of an arrow; his troops fled in confusion after a brief resistance, in which ten were slain. Two hundred prisoners, five thousand sheep, and two thousand camels, besides much house-hold goods, fell into the hands of the Moslems. Among the captives was Juweiriah, the daughter of

married her himself instead of marrying her to Zeid. In fact, the parents of Zeinab had more than once offered their daughter in marriage to Mohammed. When Zeid divorced her she was nearly thirty-five years of age, and could possibly have little charm to fascinate even a stranger. There is no historical authority for any of the stories afterwards made out to the effect that Mohammed had been to Zeid's house and having accidentally seen the beauty of Zeinab's figure through the half-opened door, or that the wind blew aside the curtain of Zeinab's chamber and disclosed her in a scanty dress, was smitten by the sight.

Harith and widow of one of her own tribe. Despairing to raise nine okks of gold, the the ransom fixed for her by the captor, she appealed to Mohammed for remission of the heavy price demanded for her freedom. Mohammed paid her ransom, and the noble lady thankfully offered him her hands in marriage. No sooner was the marriage noised abroad, than the Moslems, taking the tribe of Mustalik as relatives of the Prophet, let the rest of the prisoners go free as Juweiriah's dower. "No woman," said Ayeshah, telling the story in after days, "was ever a greater blessing to her people than Juweiriah."

It was at the time when the army (had returned) to Medinah that an incident happened which was wrongly construed by certain followers of Mohammed. Ayeshah, the Prophet's wife who had accompanied him in his expedition, had been left behind the army, because, as she subsequently explained. at night just before the time of marching, she had occasion to go to some little distance from her camp and returned a little too late to find the army had left and no one was in sight. She was certainly astonished and found herself alone ; but summoning up courage, she sat down, trusting that, when her absence should be

discovered, some persons would be sent back in quest of her. While thus seated, Safwan, a young Arab, being one of the rear-guard, came up and, recognizing her, accosted her with the usual salutation, aided her to mount the camel, and taking the bridle hastened to rejoin the army. The sun had risen, however, before he overtook it, just without the walls of Medinah. The scandal-loving Arabs made capital out of this story, but Mohammed spurned ~~at~~ the thought of any meanness in his faithful wife, and ordered each of the calumniators to be scourged with eighty stripes—punishment ordained for them in the Law.*

The greater portion of this year was passed in repressing the hostile attempts of the various nomadic tribes against the Moslems, and in inflicting punishments for various murderous forays on the Medinite territories.

Meanwhile, Abu-Sufyan, the restless chief of the Koreish, formed a confederacy with the tribes of Ghatafan and others, as well as with the Jews who had remained behind with their brethren near Kheibar. A formidable coalition was soon formed, and their combined forces amounted to ten

* Koran, xxiv. 4.

thousand well-equipped men. He now prepared to march upon Medinah. Meeting no opposition on his way, he soon encamped within a few miles of the city. Mohammed had received timely intelligence of the movement, and endeavoured to put the city in a state of defence. Salman, the Persian convert, advised that a deep moat should be digged at some distance beyond the wall, on the side on which the enemy would approach. This mode of defence, hitherto unknown in Arabia, was eagerly adopted by Mohammed; who set a great number of men to dig the moat and even assisted personally in the labour.

Scarcely was the moat completed when the enemy appeared in great force on the neighbouring hills. Leaving Abdullah, a trusty officer, to command in the city and keep a vigilant eye on the party of Abdullah son of Ubbay, Mohammed sallied forth with 3000 men, whom he formed in battle array, having the deep moat in front. Abu-Sufyan advanced confidently with his combined force, but was unexpectedly checked by the moat and by a galling fire from the Moslems drawn up beyond it. The enemy now encamped; and for some days the armies remained on (each) sides of the moat, keeping up a distant combat with

slings and stones, and flights of arrows.

In the meantime, spies brought word to Mohammed that the Jewish tribe of Koreizah, who had a strong castle near the city, and had entered into a compact with him, were in secret league with the enemy. Mohammed at once perceived the difficulty with his small forces to man the whole extent of the moat, to guard against a perfidious attack from the tribe of Koreizah, and to maintain quiet in the city where the Jews must have secret confederates. He at once deputed Saad, son of Muadh, and Saad, son of Obadah, to entreat the tribe of Koreizah to return to their duty. "Who is Mohammed?" they replied, "and who is this apostle of God, that we should obey him? We know no compact between us and him."

The siege had already lasted twenty days, and at last a party of the Koreish horsemen, among whom was Ikramah, son Abu-Jahl, and Amru, discovered a place where the moat was narrow, and putting spurs to their steeds succeeded in leaping over, followed by some of their comrades. They then challenged the bravest of the Moslems to equal combat. The challenge was accepted by Saad, son of Muadh, by Ali, and several of his companions. Ali had a close combat with Amru; they fought on

horseback and on foot, until grappling with each other they rolled in the dust. In the end Ali came out victorious. The general combat was maintained with great obstinacy; several were slain on both sides, and Saad was severely wounded. At length, the Koreish gave way, and spurred their horses to recross the moat. The elements now conspired against the besieging army; their horses perished fast, provisions failed, disunion prevailed. In the darkness of night a ~~cold~~ storm came on, with drenching rain and sweeping blasts from the desert. Their tents were blown down, their campfires extinguished; in the midst of the uproar the alarm was given that Mohammed had raised the storm by enchantment, and was coming upon them with his forces. All now was panic and confusion. Abu-Sufyan, finding all efforts vain to produce order, mounted his camel in despair, and gave the word to retreat. The confederates hurried off from the scene of tumult and terror, the Koreish towards Mecca, the others to their homes in the desert.*

* This was in A. H. 5, and is known in the annals of Islam as the "Battle of the Ditch." The whole scene is thus painted in the Koran. —

"O ye who believe! remember the favour of God towards you when hosts came upon you, and We sent

The invaders having disappeared, Mohammed thought it high time to demand an explanation of the treachery of the tribe of Koreizah, who, though united to the Moslems by the most sacred compact, in the hour of Islam's greatest agony, proved traitors, and very nearly brought about the massacre of the Moslems. This was doggedly refused. Siege was accordingly laid to their strongholds, and after twenty days they surrendered. They made only one condition, that their punishment should be left to the judgment of Saad son of Muadh, of the branch of Aus. This fierce soldier, who had been severely wounded in the attack, infuriated by their treacherous conduct, gave sentence that the fighting men should be put to death, and that the women and children be made slaves of the Moslems. Mohammed, smiling at the judgment of Saad, on whom the tribe of Koreizah relied

against them a wind and hosts that ye did not see ; and God saw what ye did

"When they came upon you from above you and from below you, and when your eyes were distracted, and your hearts came up into your throats, and ye thought of God (various) thoughts.

"There were the faithful tried, and made to quake with a violent quaking." (Koran, xxxiii. 9-11)

"And God drove back the ungodly in their wrath : they obtained no good, and God sufficed the faithful in the fight, for God is strong, mighty." (Ibid 25)

for mercy, remarked, "Truly hast thou decided like a king." *

In fact, the women and children were not guilty of treason, and deserved no punishment. Saad's judgment was allowed to be applied only to those who were guilty. "One woman alone was put to death; it was she who threw the mill-stone from the battlements."† All the women and children were afterwards released; some ransomed themselves, others went off with their freedom. But nobody was sold into slavery. "The execution of some of them was not on account of their being prisoners of war; they were war-traitors and rebels, and deserved death according to the international law. Their crime was high treason against Medina while it was blockaded. There had no actual fighting taken place between the tribe of Koreizah and the Moslems, after the former had thrown off their allegiance to the latter and had aided and abetted the enemies of the realm. They were besieged by the Moslems to punish them for their high treason, and consequently they were not prisoners of war. Even such prisoners suffer for high treason."

* Meaning a despotic monarch.

† Muir, *The Life of Mahomet*, vol. iii. p 277.

“‘Treating, in the field, the rebellious enemy according to the law and usages of war, has never prevented the legitimate Government from trying the leaders of the rebellion, or chief rebels for high treason, and from treating them accordingly, unless they are included in a general amnesty.’* ”†

That the whole of the tribe of Koreizah was not executed is shewn by the following verses of the Koran :

And He had made those of the people of the book who had backed them up to come down out of their fortresses, and cast dread into their hearts: some ye killed, others ye took captives ”‡ . . .

“ Passing now to the men executed, one can at once see how it has been exaggerated. Some say they were 400 ; others have carried the number even upto 900. But Christian historians generally give it as varying from 700 to 800. I look upon this as a gross exaggeration. Even 400 would seem an exaggerated number. The traditions agree in making the warlike materials of the Bani-Koreiza consist of 300 cuirasses, 500 bucklers, 1500 sabres, etc. In order to

* “ Miscellaneous Writings of Francis Lieber, vol. ii. Contributions to Political Science, p. 273. Philadelphia, 1881 ”

† Maulavi Cheragh Ali, *A Critical Exposition of the Popular ‘ Jihad ’*, p. 88. Calcutta : 1885.

‡ Koran, xxxiii, 26.

magnify the value of the spoil the traditions probably exaggerated these numbers.* But taking them as they stand, and remembering that such arms are always kept greatly in excess of fighting men, I am led to the conclusion that the warriors could not have been more than 200 or 300. The mistake probably arose from confounding the whole body of prisoners who fell into the hands of the Moslems with those executed."†

To this must be added the thoughtful remarks of another learned writer: "Even 200 seems to be a large number, as all of the prisoners were put up for the night in the house of Bint-al-Haris,‡ which would have been insufficient for such a large number."§

It was about this time that the Prophet granted to the monks of the monastery of St. Catherine, near Mount

* "Compare the remarks of Ibn-Khaldun (Prolegomenes d' Ibn Khaldoun, traduits par M. de Slane, Part I, p. 14)"

† Syed Ameer Ali, *A Critical Examination of the Life and Teachings of Mohammed*, p. 113: William and Norgate, London 1873.

‡ "Ibn-Hisham, p. 689. Others say the males were kept in the house of Osman-bn Zaed, and the females and children in the house of Bint-al-Haris. *Vide* Insan-al-Oyoon, by Halabi, vol. III p. 93"

§ Maulavi Cheragh Ali, *A Critical Exposition of the Popular 'Jihad'*, p. 91.

Sinai, and to all Christians, a charter similar to that granted to the Jews soon after his arrival at Medinah. It ran as follows:—

“In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate. Granted by Mohammed, Apostle of God, to the monks of Mount Sinai, and to Christians in general.

“Verily, God is the High, the Grand. From Him have come all the prophets; and there remains no record of injustice against God. Through the gifts that are given to men, Mohammed, son of Abdullah and Apostle of God, grants the present instrument to all those that are his national people, and of his religion, as a secure and positive promise to be accomplished to the Christian people and their relations, whoever they are, the noble or the vulgar, the honourable or otherwise, saying thus:

“I. Whoever of my people shall presume to break my promise and oath which is contained in this present agreement, destroys the promise of God, acts contrary to the oath, and will be a resister of the faith (which God forbid!), for thus he becomes worthy of the curse, whether he is a king himself or whatever he is.

“II. That whenever any of the monks in his travels shall happen to settle on any mountain, hill, village, or in any other

habitable place, on the seashore in the desert, in a convent, church or a house of prayer, I shall be in the midst of them, as the preserver and protector of them, their goods and effects, with my soul, aid and protection, jointly with all my people, because they are a part of my own people and an honour to me.

“III. I do hereby command all officers not to require any poll-tax from them nor any other tribute, because they shall not be forced to anything of the kind.

“IV. None shall have the right to change their judges or governors, and they shall remain in their offices without being deposed.

“V. None shall molest them when they are travelling on the road.

“VI. No one shall have the right to deprive them of their churches.

“VII. Whoso of my people annuls any of these my decrees, let him know that he annuls the ordinance of God.

“VIII. Neither shall their judges, governors, monks, servants, disciples, or any one depending on them, be liable to pay any poll-tax, or subjected to other vexations, because both they and all that belong to them are included in this my promissory oath and patent.

"IX. And of those that live quietly and solitary upon the mountains, the Moslems shall exact neither poll-tax nor tithes from their incomes, neither shall any Moslem partake of what they have, for they labour only to maintain themselves.

"X. Whenever there is a plenty of harvest, the inhabitants shall be obliged, out of every bushel, to give them a certain measure.

"XI. Neither in time of war shall they take them out of their seclusion nor compel them to go to the wars, neither shall they be required to pay any poll-tax.

"XII. Those Christians who are inhabitants and with their riches and traffic are able to pay the poll-tax, shall pay no more than what shall be reasonable.

"XIII. Excepting this, they shall not be required to pay anything, according to the express word of God.

"XIV. If a Christian woman happens to marry a Moslem, the Moslem shall not cross the inclination of his wife to keep her from her chapel and prayers and the practice of her religion.*

* The Moslem son of a Jewish or Christian mother is bound to convey her to the church door upon a beast (horse or mule, etc.) and should he be poor and cannot provide beast, or the mother be old or infirm, he is

"XV. That no one shall hinder them from repairing their churches. If the Christians should stand in need of assistance for the repair of churches or monasteries, or in any other matter pertaining to their religion, the Moslems should assist them.

"XVI. Whoever acts contrary to this my grant, or gives credit to anything contrary to it, becomes truly an apostate from God and His apostle, because this I grant them according to this promise.

"XVII. No one shall bear arms against them, but on the contrary the Moslems shall wage war for them. Should the Moslems be engaged in hostilities with outside Christians, no Christian resident among them shall be treated with contempt on account of his creed.

"XVIII. And by this I ordain that none of my people shall presume to do or act contrary to this promise until the end of time. Any Moslem acting contrary to it shall be deemed recalcitrant to God and His apostle."*

Where in the history of the world can we find a record of more enlightened toler-

bound to carry her on his shoulders. Can anything be more noble?"

* Taken from Davenport, *Apology*.

ance than this? Surely in a comparatively rude age when man did not recognize the rights and obligations of his brother-man, when nation hated nation, this charter and the one to the Jews reveal the man in his real glory—a master-mind of all ages.

Six years had now elapsed since the exiles of Mecca had left their country for the sake of their beloved Prophet and Prince and the light which he had brought to them. Their hearts still yearned for the place of their birth, from which they had been estranged by the persecution of their bigoted townsmen. Mohammed himself longed to see the place of his nativity with as great a yearning. The Temple of Mecca was sacred to all the Arabians, and open to all who would come there with the avowed object of fulfilling the pious duty. The month of pilgrimage arrived, and Mohammed announced his intention of visiting the holy places. At once a thousand voices responded to the call; and in the holy month he set out from Medinah on his pilgrimage at the head of 1400 men, partly the helpers of Medinah and partly the exiles of Mecca, all perfectly unarmed. But the Koreish had jealously barred the way by posting their troops under Khalid son of Walid. They would not allow the Moslems to

perform the pilgrimage, and maltreated the envoy who was sent to ask permission to visit the holy places. They even went so far as to attack the Prophet with darts and arrows.* Finding the Meccans inexorable, Mohammed expressed himself willing to agree to any terms they might choose to dictate. At last a treaty was drawn up by Ali. Mohammed dictated the words, "In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate;" to which the Koreish objecting it was changed into "In Thy name, O God!" after which he proceeded to dictate, "These are the conditions of peace made by Mohammed the apostle of God;" to which they again objecting, it was put thus: "These are the conditions of peace made by Mohammed the son of Abdullah." But the Moslems were so disgusted that they were on the point of breaking off the treaty, had not Mohammed with a persuasive eloquence deterred them from their purpose. The conditions of the treaty were:

"I. Any one coming from the Koreish to Mohammed, without the permission of the guardian or chief, shall be redelivered to

* A party of eighty Koreish were arrested and brought before Mohammed, but they were instantly pardoned and released on making promises of future good conduct.

the idolaters.

"II. Any individual from among the Moslems going over to the Meccans shall not be surrendered.

"III. Any tribe desirous of entering into an alliance either with the Koreish or with the Moslems shall be at liberty to do so without hindrance.

"IV. The Moslems shall return to Medinah without advancing farther.

"V. All hostilities between the Koreish and the Moslems shall cease for ten years.

"VI. The Moslems shall be permitted to visit Mecca the following year, and remain there for three days with their travelling arms, namely, their swords in sheaths."

This is known as the Truce of Hudeibiah. Though his followers were greatly disappointed in their anticipations of a grand entry into Mecca, Mohammed seems to have regarded it as a veritable victory granted him, as affording opportunity and time for his religion to expand and to force its claims upon the conviction of the Koreish.*

But the Moslems differed widely from their Prophet. Immediately after the ratification of the treaty, Omar said, "If these

* Koran, xlviii. 1-3.

terms were settled by any other man than Mohammed himself, or even by a man of his appointment, I would have scorned to listen to them." This bespeaks something of the stuff of which his converts were made, and with whom Mohammed had to deal.

As a first political effect of the treaty, the tribe of Khuzaah, who had long shown favour to the Moslems, entered immediately into open alliance with Mohammed.

The first article of the treaty was soon illustrated by one or two peculiar incidents. On one occasion, the son of Suheil, chief of the Koreish, came to Mohammed in his camp at Hudeibiah and desired to follow Mohammed. His father claimed him back, and in spite of all the remonstrances of the lad, Mohammed admitted the claim.

"Patiently, Abu-Jandal," said Mohammed to him as he was dragged away, "rely upon God: He will yet work out for thee and for others in thy plight, a way of deliverance."

Soon after the return of Mohammed, another young convert from Mecca, by name Abu-Basir, appeared at Medinah. His guardians sent two servants with a letter to Mohammed demanding his surrender. The obligation was at once admitted by

Mohammed, and Abu-Basir was led away. But on his way back at Dhul-Huleifah, not far from Medinah, he seized the sword of one of his conductors, and slew him. The other fled back to Medinah, followed by Abu-Basir. Coming into the presence of Mohammed, the servant complained of the murder, and Abu-Basir pleaded for his freedom. The youth contended that as the Prophet had once for all fulfilled the letter of the Treaty in delivering him up, he was now free to remain behind. "Alas for his mother!" * replied Mohammed, "What a kindler of war!" When he heard this, he knew that the Prophet was annoyed and was going to send him back to his guardians, the Koreish; so he escaped to the seashore, where he was joined by many others who had likewise fled from captivity at Mecca and revenged themselves by waylaying the caravans of Mecca.

It was about this time that the Koreish envoy who was sent to the Moslems was struck with the profound reverence and love shown to the Prophet by his followers. In making his report to the Koreish on his return, he said, "I have seen 'sovrans' like

* Signifying pity over the fate that awaited him at Mecca in retaliation of his bloody deed.

the Chosroes, the Cæsar, and the Negus, surrounded with all the pomp and circumstance of royalty, but I have never seen a sovran in the midst of his subjects receiving such veneration and obedience as was paid to Mohammed by his people."

Soon after the return of the Moslems to Medinah, Mohammed was called to take precautions against another danger that threatened the Moslem commonwealth.

About five day's journey to the north-east of Medinah was situated the city of Kheibar.* This region had become a place of refuge for the hostile Jews of the tribes of Nadir and Koreizah, who had been driven by Mohammed from Medinah and its environs in consequence of their treason against the Moslem commonwealth. They had joined their brethren at Kheibar and frequently incited the surrounding tribes against the Moslems and made alliance with the tribe of Ghatafan, who had taken a prominent part among the confederates at the Battle of the Ditch, to make a combined attack upon Medinah. These, and more especially Abul-Hukeik, chief of the tribe of Nadir, had excited the tribes of Fizarah

* The word means a fortified place, and was so called from the territory being studded with castles.

and other Bedouins to commit incursions upon Medinah. They had made a coalition with the tribe of Saad, son of Bakr, to make inroads on the Moslems. Lately Oseir, son of Zarim, chief of the tribe of Nadir at Kheibar, maintained the same relations with the tribe of Ghatafan as their former chief had, to make a combined attack. The tribe of Ghatafan with its branches of Bani-Fizarah and Bani-Murrah in league with those of Kheibar, were always plotting mischief in the vicinity of Fidak. They had continued for a long time to alarm Medinah with threatened attacks. In the seventh year of the Hegirah, Mohammed received timely information of the combined preparation of Kheibar and Ghatafan. He rapidly set forth in his defence and marched direct to Kheibar with 1400 men. He took up a position at Raji to cut off the mutual assistance of the Jews of Kheibar and the tribe of Ghatafan. Terms were offered to them by Mohammed, but were refused. In spite of the most determined resistance on the part of the Jews, fortress after fortress fell into the hands of the Moslems. At last came the turn of the castle *al-Kamus*, built on a steep rock, which was deemed impregnable. The siege lasted for some time, and tasked the skill and patience of

the Moslems, as yet but little practised in the attack of fortified places. They suffered too from want of provisions, for the Arabs in their hasty expeditions seldom burdened themselves with supplies, and the Jews on their approach had laid waste the level country, and destroyed the palm-trees round their capital.

The fort was stormed, but the besiegers protected themselves by trenches, and brought battering-rams to play upon the walls. A breach was at length effected, but for several days every attempt to enter was vigorously repelled. Abu-Bakr at one time led the assault bearing the standard of Islam, but after fighting with great bravery, was compelled to retreat. The next attack was headed by Omar, son of Khattab, who fought until the close of the day with no better success. The third and last attack was led by Ali, who scrambling with his followers up the great heap of stones and rubbish in front of the breach, planted his standard on the top and determined never to recede until the citadel was taken. The Jews sallied forth to drive down the assailants. In the conflict which ensued, Ali fought hand to hand with the Jewish commander Harith, and came out victorious. The brother of Harith next advanced. "He was of

a gigantic stature ; with a double cuirass, a double turban, wound round a helmet of proof, in front of which sparkled an immense diamond. He had a sword girt to each side and brandished a three-pronged spear, like a trident. ”

He made a thrust at Ali with his three-pronged lance, but it was dexterously parried ; and before he could recover himself, a blow from the scimeter of Ali divided his buckler, passed through the helm of proof, through double turban and stubborn skull, cleaving his head even to his teeth. His gigantic form fell lifeless to the earth.

The Jews now retreated into the citadel, and a general assault took place, after which the “redoubtable castle” also fell into the hands of the Moslems. The Jews now sued for forgiveness, which was accorded. Their lands and other property were guaranteed to them on condition of good conduct, together with the free practice of their religion.

While yet in the citadel of Kheibar, frequent attempts were made to assassinate the Prophet. On his entry therein, a Jewess of the name of Zeinab, a niece to Marhab, the gigantic warrior who had fought with Ali, spread a poisoned repast

for him and some of his followers. One of them died immediately after he had eaten a few mouthfuls * The life of Mohammed was saved, but the poison permeated his system, and in after-life he suffered severely from its effects. But Mohammed forgave the woman and restored her unharmed to her family.

About this time another Jewish woman named Safiyah, daughter of Akhtab, the prince of the tribe of Koreizah, offered herself to Mohammed.† She belonged to the tribe of Nadir, a branch of Aaron, and had been successively married to Salam and Kınanah, which latter was killed at the conquest of Kheibar. On Mohammed saying to her, "Thy relatives have always been hostile to me and to my cause;" she excused herself by replying, "God does not hate men for the sins of others, and surely, O Prophet of God! of all men thou wilt not hate me for the sins of my people."

It is said that Safiyah bore the mark of a bruise upon her eye; when Mohammed asked her about it, she said that, being yet

* His name was Bishr.

† The Moslems for a long time laboured under the suspicion that Safiyah had offered herself to the Prophet only to encompass his death in revenge for the death of her relatives slain at Kheibar.

Kinanah's bride she had been greatly impressed by what she heard of the Prophet's kind and gentle behaviour towards his enemies, and having once seen in a dream as if the moon had fallen from the heavens into her lap, she told of it to Kinanah, who struck her violently, saying, "What is it but that thou covetest the new King of the Hijaz, the pretender, for thy husband?" Whereupon Mohammed blessed her, and in a short time they were married. Safiyah, however, continued to be a Jew, and when she once complained to Mohammed of the scornful attitude of some of the Moslem women, Mohammed said, "Safiyah, do ye not ask them if they are better than yourself? If they repeat it, say thou, Aaron is my father, Moses my uncle, and Mohammed my husband." And to his followers he gave the following rule of conduct :

"O ye who believe! let not a people laugh another people to scorn; it may be that these are better than themselves; nor let women (laugh) other women (to scorn); it may be that these are better than themselves. Nor defame one another; nor call one another names; bad is the name wickedness after faith; and whoso repents not, these are the wrongdoers."*

* Koran, xlix. 11.

Mohammed was strictly just and equitable towards all his wives, and maintained discipline at home as abroad. On one occasion when he had taken his wives with him on a journey, and Safiyah's camel was taken ill, Mohammed asked Zeinab, his other wife, if she could lend her spare camel to Safiyah till the next station; to which she replied in feminine spite that she would not give anything to "that Jewess"; which so offended Mohammed that for two or three months he would not see Zeinab, till at last she repented of her cruel behaviour towards her companion and was reconciled.*

Shortly after his return to Medinah, Mohammed had the pleasure of seeing his beloved disciples who had fled to Abyssinia from the persecutions of the Koriesh at Mecca. Among them was a woman whose husband had died in exile. She was known by the name of Ummi-Habibah, or Mother of Habibah, from a daughter she had. This widow was the daughter of Mohammed's arch-enemy Abu-Sufyan; and the Prophet conceived that a marriage with the daughter might soften the hostility of the father; and they were married.

It was about this time that little

* Koran, xxxiii. 51. Cf. Abu-Daud, from Ayesah.

Ibrahim, the only child of Mohammed, fell sick and died in his father's arms. Mohammed's hopes and affections centered for a while in his little son. "There is indeed," says Muir, "no ground for supposing that Mahomet ever contemplated the building up of a kingdom to be perpetuated in his own family. The prophetic office was personal, and his political authority was exercised solely in virtue of that office. But he regarded his children with a loving and partial eye; and no doubt rejoiced in the prospect, dear to every Arab, of having his name and memory perpetuated by male issue; and he might also naturally expect that his son would be cherished and honoured by all the followers of Islam." Mohammed could not control a father's feelings as he bent in agony over this blighted blossom of his hopes. Yet in this trying hour he showed that acquiescence, the acceptance with thankfulness of God's will, which formed the foundation of his faith. "My heart is near setting," murmured he, "and my eyes run down with tears at parting with thee, O my child! and still greater would be my grief, did I not know that I should yet meet thee; and yet I say nothing but what my Lord pleases: we are of God, and to Him shall we return."

An eclipse of the sun occurred on the same day, and the people spoke of it as a tribute to the death of the Prophet's son. "A vulgar impostor," observes Muir, "would have accepted and confirmed the delusion ; but Mahomet rejected the idea." "The sun and the moon," he told them, "are among the wonders of God. Their eclipse has nothing to do either with the birth or death of any mortal."

CHAPTER V.

MISSIONS TO VARIOUS PRINCES.

DURING the remaining portion of the year Mohammed remained at Medinah, sending forth his trusty disciples to preach Islam abroad, with the following strict injunctions :

“Deal gently with the people, and be not harsh; cheer them and condemn them not. They will ask thee, ‘What is the key to heaven?’ Tell them, ‘It is to believe in the truth and goodness of God, and to do good.’”

He also sent expeditions against the marauding and hostile tribes, enjoining their leaders in peremptory terms never to injure the weak :

“In no case shalt thou use deceit or perfidy, nor shalt thou kill any child.”

“In avenging the injuries inflicted upon us, molest not the harmless inmates of domestic seclusion; spare the weakness of the female sex; injure not the infant at the breast, or those who are ill on bed. Abstain from demolishing the dwellings of the unresisting inhabitants; destroy not their means of subsistence, nor their fruit-trees; and touch not the palm, so useful to people

for its shade and delightful for its verdure."

Mohammed also taught:

"Faith is a restraint against all violence :
let no man of faith commit violence."*

Mohammed also despatched several envoys to the neighbouring (sovrans) and their subjects inviting them to ~~except~~ Islam. Two of the most noted embassies were to Heraclius, Emperor of the Greeks, and to Khusru Parwiz, Chosroes of Persia. The Moslem envoy arrived into the presence of the Chosroes and handed him the letter. The Chosroes sent for his secretary and ordered him to read it. He began :

"In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate. From Mohammed, son of Abdullah and apostle of God, to Khusru Parwiz, Chosroes of Persia."

"What!" cried Parwiz, starting up in haughty indignation, "will my slave address me on terms of equality?" So saying he seized the letter and tore it to pieces, without seeking to know its contents, and drove the envoy from his presence with contumely. He then wrote to his viceroy in Yeman to bring him Mohammed dead or alive; but the deputies had scarcely returned when the Chosroes was murdered by his own son.

* *Sayings*, 213.

The other letter, however, addressed to Heraclius was forwarded by the governor of Bostra, into whose hands it was delivered by the Moslem envoy, to the Greek Emperor. "In strange and simple accents," says Muir, "like those of the prophets of old, it summoned Heraclius to acknowledge the mission of Mahomet, to cast aside the idolatrous worship of Jesus and his Mother, and to return to the Catholic faith of the one only God."

Upon receiving this, the Emperor is said to have summoned to his presence Abu-Sufyan, still one of the bitterest enemies of Mohammed, who happened to be then at Gaza with a caravan of merchants from Arabia.

"Does Mohammed come of a noble family?" inquired Heraclius.

"He comes of the most respectable and illustrious family of the Arabs," answered Abu-Sufyan.

"Has there been any of your people who claimed to be prophet before him?"

"None of our people before him ever claimed to be a prophet."

"Was there any in his line who lost his kingdom?"

"No such king ever existed in his line."

“ Who do generally believe in him, the rich or the poor ? ”

“ Mostly the poor and indigent.”

“ Are they making any progress ? ”

“ They are rapidly increasing.”

“ Are there those who, after they have believed, have forsaken him ? ”

“ There has not been one who has forsaken him.”

“ What dost thou know of his character before he proclaimed his mission ? ”

“ We have all had a very high opinion of him ; he was universally known amongst us as al-Amin—the trusty.”

“ Did you ever have to do with him in war ? ”

“ Yes.”

“ Does he break his word in the battle ? ”

“ He has hitherto never done so.”

“ Which of you has been victorious ? ”

“ Sometimes he had the victory and even once he was defeated.”

“ What are the doctrines he advances ? ”
then eagerly inquired Herachus.

“ He bids us abandon the worship of our idols and adore an unseen God, to give alms, to observe truth and purity, to abstain from fornication and other vices, and to shun abominations. ”

CHAPTER VI.

THE VISIT OF ACCOMPLISHMENT.

THE time at length arrived when, by the truce of Hodeibiah with the people of Mecca, Mohammed and his followers were permitted to make a pilgrimage to their sacred city, and pass three days unmolested at the sacred shrines. He departed accordingly with 2000 Moslems avowedly for the pious purpose.

Great was their joy on beholding once more the walls and towers of the sacred city. They entered the gates in pilgrim garb, with devout and thankful hearts, and performed all the ancient and customary rites with a zeal and devotion which gratified beholders. Strictest discipline was observed in all things. When a Moslem, Abdullah son of Rawahah, as he made the circuit of the Kaabah, shouted out some martial defiant verses addressed to the people of Mecca, Mohammed checked him, saying, "With gentleness, son of Rawahah! do not utter this, but say, There is no God but God; it is He who has upheld His servant and His cause." "It was surely a strange sight," says Muir, "which at this time presented itself in the

vale of Mecca,—a sight unique in the history of the world. The ancient city is for three days evacuated by all its inhabitants, high and low, every house deserted; and, as they retire, the exiled converts, many years banished from their birthplace, approach in a great body, accompanied by their allies, revisit the empty homes of their childhood, and within the short space fulfil the rites of pilgrimage. The ousted inhabitants, climbing the heights around, take refuge under tents, or other shelter amongst the hills and glens; and, clustering on the overhanging peak of Abu Cobeis, thence watch the movements of the visitors beneath, as with the Prophet at their head they make the circuit of the Kaaba and the rapid procession between Safa and Marwa; and anxiously scan every figure if perchance they may recognize among the worshippers some long-lost friend or relative. It was a scene rendered possible only by the throes which gave birth to Islam.”*

While yet in Mecca, at the instance of his uncle, Mohammed entered into a political alliance with Meimunah, the widowed daughter of Harith, which gained over to his side two powerful proselytes, Khalid son of

* Muir, *The Life of Mahomet*, p. 402. London : Smith, Elder & Co., 1877.

Walid, leader of the Koreish cavalry at the disastrous battle of Ohad, and Amr son of As, better known by the name of Amru, who assailed Mohammed with (poetry and) satires at the commencement of his prophetic career, and who had been an ambassador from the Koreish to the Negus of Abyssinia, to obtain the surrender of Moslem fugitives.

When the three days were over, Mohammed and his party peaceably returned to Medinah, and the people of Mecca re-entered their homes. But this pilgrimage and the scrupulous regard for his pledged word displayed by Mohammed, advanced the cause of Islam among its enemies. Converts increased daily and many leading men of the Koreish came over to Mohammed. The clans around were sending in their deputations of homage.

CHAPTER VII.

EXPEDITION AGAINST MUTAH.

ABOUT a month after his return from Mecca, Mohammed sent a party of 50 men to the tribe of Suleim under a Moslem of that tribe to preach Islam, but they were attacked and killed, the chief alone having escaped to Medinah. Similarly, the parties sent to several tribes on the Syrian frontier were treacherously attacked and exterminated. Of these unfortunate missions one was to the governor of Bosrah (Hauran). The Moslem envoy of this deputation was killed at Mutah, a town about three days' journey to the east of Jerusalem, by Sharhbil, who governed Mutah in the name of Heraclius.

Very great was the fury of the Moslems upon the murder of their compatriot, and 3000 men were in a moment determined upon exacting reparation from the Ghasسانide prince. They begged Mohammed to allow them to march against the offending city. The Prophet seeing the enthusiasm of his followers did not dissuade them from their purpose, but entrusted the command of the army to his faithful freedman

Zeid, and associated several chosen officers with him. Among them was one Jaafar, son of Abu-Talib and brother of Ali; the same who, by his eloquence, had vindicated the doctrines of Islam before the Negus of Abyssinia. He was now in the prime of life, and noted for great courage and manly beauty. Another was Abdullah son of Rawahah, the poet, who had signalized himself in arms as well as in poetry. A third was the new proselyte Khalid son of Walid, who joined the expedition as a volunteer.

The orders to Zeid were, as usual, to treat people with lenity. Women, children, monks, and the weak, were to be spared at all events; nor were any houses to be pulled down, nor trees cut down.

The Moslems met the enemy near Mubah, the scene of the murder, and encountered them with great valour. In the heat of the conflict Zeid received a mortal wound. The banner of the Moslems was falling from his grasp, when it was seized and borne aloft by Jaafar. The battle thickened round him, for the banner was the object of fierce contention. He defended it with desperate valour. The hand by which he held it was struck off; he grasped it with the other. This, too, was severed;

he embraced it with his bleeding arms. A blow from a scimeter cleft his skull; he sank dead upon the field, still clinging to the standard. Abdullah next reared the banner; but he too fell beneath the sword. Khalid, the new convert, seeing the three Moslem leaders slain, now grasped the fatal standard, and in his hand it remained aloft. His voice rallied the wavering Moslems: his powerful arm cut its way through the thickest of the enemy.

Night separated the combatants. In the morning Khalid, whom the army now acknowledged as their commander, proved himself as wary as he was valiant. By dint of marches and counter-marches, he presented his forces ^{at} ~~in~~ so many points (of view) that the enemies were deceived as to his real strength and supposed he had received a strong reinforcement. At his first charge, therefore, they retreated: their retreat soon became a signal for flight, in which they were pursued for some miles.

The return of the army was received with mingled shouts and lamentations at Medinah. All bewailed the fate of Jaafar, brought home a ghastly corpse to the city whence they had so recently seen him sally forth in all the pride of valiant manhood, the admiration of every beholder. He had

left behind him a beautiful wife and an infant son. The heart of Mohammed was touched by her affliction. He took the orphan child in his arms and bathed it with his tears. But most was he affected when he beheld the young daughter of his faithful Zeid approaching him. He fell on her neck and wept in speechless emotion. A bystander, seeing him in tears, demanded, "And dost thou weep, O Prophet of God? hast thou not forbidden us to weep for the dead?" "No," replied Mohammed, "I have forbidden you to utter shrieks and ~~and~~ outcries, to beat your faces, and rend your garments; these are suggestions of Satan; but tears shed for a calamity are as a balm to the heart and are sent in mercy."

Here we may mention the martyrdom of Farwah, an Arab of the tribe of Jazm, and governor of Amman. He sent a despatch announcing his conversion with some valuable presents to Mohammed. The Prophet in acknowledging these in a letter sent him some directions on the every-day life-duty of a Moslem. The Roman governor hearing of his conversion sought to bribe him by offers of promotion to return to Christianity. This Farwah sternly refused and was put to death.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE CONQUEST OF MECCA.

It was about this time that the Koreish and their allies, the tribe of Bakr, in violation of the treaty of Hodeibiah, attacked the tribe of Khuzaah, who were under the protection of, and in alliance with, the Moslems. The tribe of Khuzaah appealed to Mohammed for help. He accordingly marched 10,000 men against the Koreish at Mecca. Omar, who had charge of regulating the march and appointing the encampments, led the army by lonely passes of the mountains, taking care to prohibit the sound of trumpet, or anything else that could betray their movements. While on the march, Mohammed was joined by his uncle Abbas, who had come forth with his family from Mecca to rally under the standard of Mohammed. Mohammed received him graciously. The army reached the valley of Marruz-Zuhran, near the sacred city, without being discovered.

It was nightfall when they silently pitched their tents, and now Omar permitted them to light their watch-fires. In the dead of night, a scouting party brought two

prisoners captured near the city. They were conducted to Omar, who recognized Abu-Sufyan and his captain by the light. His ready scimeter might have dealt a blow to Abu-Sufyan had not Abbas stepped forward and taken him under his protection, "until the will of the Prophet should be known." Omar rushed forth to ascertain that will, followed by Abbas accompanied by Abu-Sufyan.

When Mohammed thus beheld in his power his inveterate enemy, who had driven him from his home and country, and persecuted his family and friends, his eyes ran with tears, and he freely forgave Abu-Sufyan. The rancour of Abu-Sufyan was subdued by the mildness of Mohammed, and he immediately made the profession of Islam.

Abu-Sufyan having embraced the faith, through him Mohammed offered terms to the people of Mecca, in case of their submission. None were to be harmed who should lay down their arms, remain quietly in their houses, or should take refuge in the house of Abu-Sufyan, or under the banner of Abu-Rawahah.

That Abu-Sufyan might take back to the city a proper idea of the force brought against it, he was stationed with

Abbas at a narrow defile where the whole army passed in review. As the various Arab tribes marched by with their different arms and ensigns, Abbas explained the names and country of each. Abu-Sufyan was surprised at the number, discipline, and equipment of the troops; for the Moslems had been rapidly improving in the means and art of war; but when Mohammed approached, in the midst of a chosen guard, armed at all points and glittering with steel, his astonishment passed all bounds. "By God! there is no withstanding this," exclaimed Abu-Sufyan.

He then hastened back to Mecca, and assembling the inhabitants, told them of the mighty host at hand, led on by Mohammed; of the favourable terms offered in case of their submission, and of the vanity of all resistance. As Abu-Sufyan was the soul of the opposition to Mohammed and his followers, his words had instant effect in producing acquiescence in an event which seemed to leave no alternative. The greater part of the inhabitants, therefore, prepared to witness, without resistance, the entry of Mohammed.

Mohammed, in the meantime, not knowing what resistance he might meet with, made a careful distribution of his forces as

he approached the city. While the main body marched directly forward, strong detachments advanced over the hills on each side. To Ali, who commanded a large body of cavalry, was confided the sacred banner which he was to plant on Mount Hajun, and maintain it there until joined by the Prophet. Express orders were given to all the newly-converted generals whose zeal for their new cause might lead them to transgress, to practise forbearance, and in no instance to make the first attack. Overhearing one of his captains exclaim, in the heat of his zeal, that "no place was sacred on the day of battle,"* he instantly appointed a cooler-headed commander in his place.†

The main body of the army now advanced without molestation. Mohammed brought up the rear-guard, mounted on his camel. Arrived on Mount Hajun, where Ali had planted the standard of the faith, a tent was pitched for him. Here he alighted, put off his garments, and assumed the pilgrim's garb. Casting a look down into the plain, however, he beheld, with grief and indignation, the gleam of swords and lances,

* Saad son of Obadah.

† Keis, son of Saad, a person of towering stature but of gentler disposition than his father.

and Khalid, who commanded the left wing, in a full career of carnage. His troops, composed of Arab tribes recently converted to Islam, had been galled by a flight of arrows from a body of the tribe of Koreish; whereupon the fiery warrior charged into the thickest of them with sword and lance; his troops pressed after him; they put the enemy to flight, entered the gates of Mecca pell-mell with them, and nothing but the swift commands of Mohammed preserved the city from a general massacre.

The carnage being stopped, and no further opposition manifested, Mohammed descended from the mount and approached the gates, seated on his camel, accompanied by some of his disciples. The sun was just rising as he entered the gates of his native city with the glory of a conqueror but the garb and humility of a pilgrim.

“Now was the time for the Prophet to show his blood-thirsty nature. His old persecutors are at his feet. Will he not trample on them, torture them, revenge himself after his own cruel manner? Now the man will come forward in his true colours: we may prepare our horror, and cry shame beforehand.

“But what is this? Is there no blood in the streets? Where are the bodies of the

thousands that have been butchered? Facts are hard things; and it is a fact that the day of Mohammad's greatest triumph over his enemies was also the day of his grandest victory over himself. He freely forgave the Kureysh all the years of sorrow and cruel scorn they had inflicted on him: he gave an amnesty to the whole population of Mekka. Four criminals, whom justice condemned, made up Mohammad's proscription list when he entered as a conqueror the city of his bitterest enemies. The army followed the example, and entered quietly and peaceably; no house was robbed, no woman insulted."*

It was thus that Mohammed entered again his native city. Can history point to any triumphant entry like this one? Can history point in its pages to as generous and humane a treatment of the conquered enemies as this?

Without dismounting, Mohammed repaired directly to the Kaabah, and would have entered it, but Othman son of Talhah, the ancient custodian, locked the door. A follower of Mohammed snatched the keys, but Mohammed caused them to be returned

* Introduction to E W Lane's *Selections from the Kur-an*, by Stanley Lane-Poole, p. lxxvii. London: 1879.

to the venerable officer, and so won him by his kindness, that he not merely threw open the doors, but subsequently embraced Islam.

Mohammed now proceeded to fulfil the great object of his religious aspirations, the purifying of the Kaabah from all symbols of idolatry, with which it had so long been crowded, and the dedicating it to the worship of God who brooks no rivals. Going in to the Kaabah, Mohammed stood before each one of the idols (which were 360 in number) and pointed to them with his staff, saying, "Now is the truth come, let falsehood vanish; verily, falsehood is evanescent;"* and at these words his attendants hewed them down, and all the idols of Mecca and round about were destroyed.

At noon, a Moslem at the command of Mohammed, summoned the people to prayer from the top of the Kaabah, a custom continued ever since throughout the Moslem world, from minarets and towers provided in every mosque. He then fixed the *kiblah*, or point towards which to turn in prayer, with a view to outward uniformity in worship.

He then addressed the people in a ser-

* Koran xvii. 81.

mon, setting forth his principal doctrines, the unity, immateriality, power, mercy, and supreme love of the Creator; charity, natural equality and brotherhood among mankind.

The religious ceremonial being thus ended, Mohammed took his station on the hill of Safa, and the people of Mecca, men and women, passed before him, taking the oath of fealty to him as the Prophet of God, and renouncing idolatry. In the midst of his triumph, however, he rejected all homage paid exclusively to himself, and all regal authority. "Why dost thou tremble?" said he to a man who approached with timid and faltering steps. "Of what dost thou stand in awe? I am no king, but the son of a Koreish woman who ate flesh dried in the sun."

About this time Abu-Bakr approached Mohammed leading his father Abu-Kuhafah, who was bowed down with great age, and whose locks were as silver. Mohammed received him with consideration: "Why didst thou not leave thine aged father in his house, for I would have gone and seen him there?" "It was more proper that he should visit thee, O Prophet! than that thou shouldst visit him." Mohammed seated Abu-Kuhafah beside him, and affection-

ately pressing his hand upon the old man's breast, invited him to accept Islam, which he readily did.

His lenity was equally conspicuous. The once haughty chiefs of the Koreish appeared with abject countenances before the man they had persecuted so virulently (only yesterday) for now their lives were in his power.

"Descendants of the Koreish! how do you think I should act towards you?" demanded Mohammed. "With kindness and pity, gracious brother and nephew!" replied they, with one voice. At these words, says the chronicler, Mohammed burst into tears, and said, "Yes; I will not reproach you to-day; God pardon you! verily, He is the most merciful of the merciful."*

Some of his followers, who had shared his persecutions, were disappointed in their anticipations of a bloody revenge, and murmured at his clemency; but Mohammed persisted in it, and read out to them the following from the Koran:

"Turn aside evil with what is better.†

"And who speaks better than he who calls (men) to God and does good, and then says, Verily I am a Moslem?"

* Cf. Koran, xii. 92.

† xxiii. 96.

“ Good and evil are not alike: turn aside (evil) with what is better; and lo! he, between whom and thyself was enmity, shall become, as it were, (thy) warmest friend * .

“ Say to those who believe, that they pardon those who fear not the punishment of God †. . .

“ And hasten emulously for pardon from your Lord and paradise, whose breadth is (as) the heavens and the earth, prepared for the pious; who are charitable in prosperity and adversity, and suppress (their) rage, and forgive men; for God loves those who do good.” ‡ . . .

Among the Koreish women who advanced to take the oath, he descried Hind, the wife of Abu-Sufyan; the savage woman who had animated the Koreish at the disastrous battle of Ohad, and had gnawed the heart of Hamzah, the uncle of Mohammed. On the present occasion she had disguised herself to escape detection; but seeing the eyes of Mohammed fixed on her, she threw herself at his feet, exclaiming, “ I am Hind; pardon! pardon!” Mohammed pardoned her, and was requited for his clemency by her making his doctrines the subject of contemptuous

*Koran xli. 33, 34.

† xlv. 14.

‡ iii. 133, 134.

sarcasms.

Among those destined to punishment was Waksah, the Ethiopian, who had slain Hamzah; but he had fled from Mecca on the entrance of the army. At a subsequent period he presented himself before the Prophet, and prayed for forgiveness. He too was forgiven.

Another of the proscribed was Abdullah, son of Saad son of Sarrah, a young Koeish, distinguished for wit and humour, as well as for warlike accomplishments. He was at one time a secretary to the Prophet, and when Mohammed dictated he used to change the words and denaturalize their meaning. His sacrilege being discovered, he had fled and had relapsed into idolatry. On the capture of the city, he supplicated Mohammed for pardon, which was granted, and he again turned a Moslem.

Another of the proscribed was Ikramah, son of Abu-Jahl, who on many occasions had manifested a deadly hostility to the Prophet, inherited from his father. On the entrance of Mohammed into Mecca, Ikramah threw himself upon a fleet horse, and escaped by an opposite gate, leaving behind him a beautiful wife to whom he was recently married. She embraced Islam, but soon after learnt that her husband, in attempting

to escape by sea to Yeman, had been driven back to port. Hastening to the presence of the Prophet, she threw herself on her knees before him, loose, dishevelled, and unveiled, and implored grace for her husband. The Prophet, moved at her grief, raised her gently from the earth, and told her her prayer was granted. Hurrying to the seaport, she arrived just as the vessel in which her husband had embarked was about to sail. She returned, mounted behind him, to Mecca. Touched by the kindness and gentle behaviour of the Prophet, Ikramah soon presented himself before the Prophet and made the profession of Islam. Mohammed appointed Ikramah as the commander of a battalion of the Hawazins, as the dower of his beautiful and devoted wife, and bestowed liberal donations on the youthful couple.

The Ansar, or helpers of Medinah, who had aided Mohammed in his campaign, began to fear that its success might prove fatal to their own interests. They watched him anxiously, as one day, after praying on the hill of Safa, he sat gazing down wistfully upon Mecca, the scene of his early struggles and recent glory, and said one to another, "Behold! Mohammed is conqueror and master of the city of his birth: he will with-

out doubt establish himself here, and forsake Medinah !” Their words reached his ear, and he turned to them with affectionate warmth : “No, by Allah ! when you plighted to me your allegiance, I swore to live and die with you ; I should not act as the servant of God, nor as His apostle, were I to leave you.”

And he was as good as his word. The city of his fathers, the metropolis of his race, the shrine of his religion, was again deserted for his humble dwelling among those who had stood by him in the day of trial.

Mohammed now despatched his faithful disciples in every direction to call the wild tribes of the desert to Islam, with strict injunctions to preach peace and goodwill, to inculcate the faith, and to abstain from violence, unless assailed. These injunctions were all obeyed with one single sad exception. The troops of Khalid, son of Walid, under the orders of this newly-converted fierce warrior, killed a few of the tribe of Jazimah, apparently mistaking them for hostile soldiers ; but the other Moslems interfering prevented further massacre.

Mohammed, when he heard of this unprovoked outrage, raised his hands to Heaven in distress, and twice called God to witness that he was innocent of it. Khalid, when

upbraided with it on his return, would fain have shifted the blame on Abdur-Rahman, one of the earliest of converts to Islam, who had accompanied him; but Mohammed rejected indignantly an imputation against one of the earliest and worthiest of his followers. Ali was forthwith sent to restore to the people of the tribe of Jazimah what Khalid had wrested from them, and to make pecuniary compensation to the relatives of the slain. "It was a mission congenial with his nature and he executed it faithfully." Inquiring into the losses and sufferings of each individual, he paid him to his full content. When every loss was made good, and all blood atoned for, he distributed the remaining money among the people, "gladdening every heart by his gentleness and benevolence." And Ali received the thanks and praises of the Prophet, but the vindictive Khalid was rebuked even by those whom he had thought to please. "Behold!" said he to Abdur-Rahman, "I have avenged the death of thy father." "Rather say," retorted the Moslem indignantly, "thou hast avenged the death of thine uncle: thou hast disgraced the faith by an act worthy of an idolater."

CHAPTER IX.

THE BATTLE OF HUNEIN.

WHILE the apostles of Mohammed were spreading his doctrines by preaching and persuasion in the plains, a hostile storm was gathering in the mountains. A league was formed among the Thakiftes, the Hawazins, the Jashmites, the Saadites, and several other of the hardy mountain tribes of Bedouins, to check a power which threatened to subjugate all Arabia and with the intention of overwhelming Mohammed before he he could make preparations to repulse their attack.

Malik, son of Auf, the chief of the Thakiftes, had the general command of the confederacy. He appointed the valley of Autas, between Hunein and Tayif, as the place of assemblage and encampment; and as he knew the fickle nature of his people, and their proneness to return home on the least caprice, he ordered them to bring with them their families and effects. They assembled, accordingly, from various parts, to the number of 4,000 fighting men; but the camp was crowded with women and children, and encumbered with flocks

and herds.

In the meantime, Mohammed, hearing of the gathering storm, had sallied forth to anticipate it, at the head of about 12,000 troops, partly fugitives from Mecca, and helpers from Medinah, partly Arabs of the desert, some of whom had not yet embraced the faith.

Pushing forward for the enemy's camp at Autas, he came to a deep gloomy valley on the confines of Hunein. The troops marched without order through the rugged defile, each one choosing his own path. Suddenly they were assailed by showers of darts, stones, and arrows, which ~~lay~~ ^{slay} two or three of Mohammed's soldiers dead at his feet, and wounded several others. Malik, in fact, had taken post with his ablest warriors ~~about~~ ^{on} the heights commanding this narrow gorge. Every cliff and cavern was garrisoned with archers and slingers, and some rushed down to contend at close quarters.

Struck with a sudden panic the Moslems turned and fled. For a time all seemed lost, but Mohammed's appeal to his people decided the fate of the field, and the idolaters were defeated with great loss.* Malik and the Thakifites took

* Koran, ix 25, 26.

refuge in the distant city of Tayif, the rest retreated to the camp in the valley of Autas. This was besieged, and after a spirited defence the family of the Hawazins, with all their goods and chattels, fell into the hands of the Moslems.

Among the female captives was Shima, the daughter of Mohammed's nurse Hali-mah. Mohammed treated her with great kindness, giving her the choice either to remain with him, or to return to her home and kindred.

Mohammed now proceeded in pursuit of the Thakifites, who had taken refuge in Tayif; which was besieged. The walls were too strong, however, to be stormed, and there was a protecting castle. For the first time, therefore, he had recourse to catapults, battering-rams, and other engines used in sieges, but unknown in Arabia. These were prepared under the direction of Salman, the Persian convert.

The besieged, however, repulsed every attack, galling the assailants with darts and arrows, and pouring down melted iron upon the shields of bull-hides, under covert of which they approached the walls.

After twenty days of unsuccessful attempts, Mohammed raised the siege, and returned to Jiranah, where he had left the

captives and the booty.*

In a little while appeared a deputation from the Hawazins, begging the restitution of their families and effects. With them came Halimah, Mohammed's foster-nurse, now well-stricken in years. He treated her with great consideration, "spreading his mantle for her to sit upon."†

Aware of the sensitiveness of the Arab nature, however, regarding their rights, Mohammed replied to Bedouin deputies that he could not force his people to abandon all the fruits of their victory, and that they must at least forfeit their effects if they would regain their families. "However," said Mohammed, "my own share in the captives, and that of the children of Abdul-Muttalib, I will give you back at once, and there are some among the Moslems who may be moved. So come to me after noon-day prayer, and say, 'We supplicate the Apostle of God to intercede with the Moslems, and the Moslems to intercede with the Apostle of God, to restore to us our women and children.'"

The envoys did as they were advised. Mohammed and Abbas immediately

* There were: 6,000 captives, 24,000 camels, 40,000 sheep, 4,000 ounces of silver. (Ibn Saad)

† Abu-Tufail in Abu-Daud *Sayings*, 691.

renounced their share of the captives ; their example was followed by all excepting the tribes of Tamim and Fizarah, but Mohammed brought them to consent by promising them a higher reward in the life to come : and 6,000 captives were (in a moment) free. This generosity on the part of Mohammed and his followers won the hearts of many Thakifites, and they professed Islam.

Mohammed now sent an envoy to Malik, who remained shut up in Tayif, offering the restitution of all spoils taken from him at Hunein, and a present of 100 camels, if he would only come to Mohammed and renounce all further hostility to him and his followers. Malik was conquered and converted by this liberal offer, and brought several of his confederate tribes with him to the standard of the Prophet.

The Moslems now began to fear that Mohammed, in these magnanimous impulses, might squander away all the gains of their recent battles ; thronging round him, therefore, they clamoured for a division of the spoils and captives. The Prophet then shared the booty as usual ; four-fifths among the troops ; but his own fifth he distributed among those whose fidelity he wished to insure. The Koreish he considered dubious allies ; he now sought to rivet them to him

by gifts. To Abu-Sufyan and his family, therefore he gave 300 camels and 120 ounces of silver.* To Ikramah, son of Abu-Jahl, and others of like note, he gave in due proportions, and all from his own share.

Among the lukewarm converts thus propitiated was Abbas, son of Mardas, a poet. He was dissatisfied with his share, and vented his discontent in satirical verses. Mohammed overheard him. "Take that man from here," said he, "and cut out his tongue." Omar, the most fiery of his disciples, would have executed the sentence literally, and on the spot; but Ali, better instructed in the Prophet's meaning, led Abbas, all trembling, to the public square where the captured cattle were collected, and bade him choose what he liked from among them. "What!" cried the poet joyously, relieved from the horrors of mutilation, "is this the way the Prophet would cut out my tongue? By Allah! I will take nothing." Mohammed, however, persisted in his politic generosity, and sent him 60 camels. From that time forward

* Other recipients were: Hakim, son of Hizam, 200 camels, Nadr, son of Harith; Safwan, son of Umeiyah; Keis, son of Adi, Suheil son of Amru; Huweitab, son of Abdul Uzza; Akra, son of Habis, Uainah, son of Hishn, each received 100 camels.

the poet was never weary of chanting the praises of the Prophet.

While thus stimulating the goodwill of the luke-warm proselytes of Mecca, Mohammed excited the murmurs of his helpers of Medinah. "Behold!" said they, "how he lavishes gifts upon the treacherous Koreish, while we who have been faithful to him through all dangers, receive nothing but our naked share. What have we done that we should be thus thrown into the background?"

Being told of their murmurs, he ordered them to be assembled. He then addressed them in the following words: "Ye helpers of Medinah! I have learnt the discourse ye hold among yourselves. When I came amongst you, ye were wandering in darkness, and the Lord brought you into the light; ye were suffering, and He made you happy; ye were at enmity among yourselves, and He filled your hearts with brotherly love and concord. Was it not so? tell me."

They all acknowledged the truth of what he said. "Look ye," continued he, "I came to you stigmatized as a liar, and ye believed in me; persecuted, and ye protected me; a fugitive, and ye sheltered me; helpless, and ye assisted me. Think ye I do not feel all this? Think ye I can ever

be ungrateful? Ye say that I give presents to these people, and give none to you. It is true: I give them worldly gear, but it is only to win their worldly hearts. To you, who have been true to me, I give—myself! They return home with sheep and and camels; ye return with the Prophet of God among you. For, by Him in whose hand stands my life! if the world should go one way and ye another, verily, I would remain with you. Which of you, then, have I rewarded most?"

The Helpers were moved even to tears by this touching appeal of the Prophet, and all cried out with one voice, "Yea, yea, Prophet of God! we are well satisfied with our shares." Thereupon they returned happy and contented.

Soon after this Mohammed returned to Mecca, where he appointed Muadh, son of Jabal, as Imam to instruct the people in Islam, and gave the government of the city into the hands of Otbah, a youth of eighteen; after which he bade farewell to his native place, and set out with his troops on the return to Medinah.

Soon after the arrival of the Prophet at Medinah, arrived a deputation from the refractory and hard-hearted idolaters of Tayif, the very people who only nine

/ years ago had driven the poor preacher from their midst with insults and violence. They now prayed for forgiveness and permission to enter the circle of Islam. They begged, however, for a short respite for their favourite idols; but the Prophet refused it saying that Islam and idols could not exist together. They then begged that they might be (dispensed with as to their) saying of the appointed prayers, to which Mohammed answered that there could be no good in that religion wherein was no prayer. Sorrowfully, at last, they submitted to all that was required of them. They were excused, however, from destroying the idols with their own hands. And Abu-Sufyan and Mugheirah were sent to Tayif to destroy the idols, which they did amidst uproarious cries of despair and grief from the population of Tayif.

About this time the tribe of Tay proved hostile, and a small force was despatched under Ali to quell their disaffection. Adi, son of Hatim, whose munificence and generosity have passed into a proverb, was the chief of the tribe. On the approach of the Moslems he fled with his wife and children on camels to Syria, leaving his sister, Safanah; who, with some of the principal men of her tribe, fell into the hands of the

Moslems. They were conducted with every mark of respect and consideration to Medinah. Seeing Mohammed pass by her, she cried to him: "Apostle of God! my father is dead; my brother, my only relation, fled into the mountains on the approach of the Moslems: I cannot ransom myself; it is thy generosity which I implore for my deliverance. My father was an illustrious man, the prince of his tribe, a man who ransomed prisoners, protected the honour of women, helped the poor, consoled the afflicted, never rejected any demand. I am Safanah, daughter of Hatim."

"Thy father indeed had the virtues of a Moslem," answered Mohammed.

Then addressing the Moslems around him, he said, "The daughter of Hatim is free, her father was a generous and humane man; verily God loves the beneficent." So saying he not only set her free, but gave her raiment and a camel, and sent her by the first caravan bound to Syria. And with her all the people were set at liberty. Touched by gratitude, Adi hastened to Medinah where he accepted Islam, and returning to his people persuaded them to embrace the faith; and the tribe of Tay once so inimical to Moslems, became henceforward devoted followers of Mohammed. ·

Adi's account of his interview with Mohammed, presents a striking picture of the simple manners and mode of life of the Prophet, now in the full exercise of (soveran) power, and the career of rapid success. "He asked me," says Adi, "my name, and when I gave it, invited me to accompany him to his home. On the way a weak emaciated woman accosted him. He stopped and talked to her of her affairs. This, thought I to myself, is not very kingly. When we arrived at his house, he gave me a leathern cushion stuffed with palm-leaves to sit upon, while he sat upon the bare ground. This, thought I, is not very princely."

It was about this time, in the ninth year of the Hegirah, that Mohammed received news of the gathering of a large army on the confines of Syria against the Moslems. A year's pay, so ran the report, had been advanced by the Roman Emperor who was at Hims, in order that the soldiers might be well-furnished for a long campaign; the tribes of the Syrian desert were flocking around the Roman Eagle, and the vanguard was already at Balka, not far from Muthah. Mohammed at once proposed to disperse them before they could gather sufficient strength. A small force however was collected; and accompanied by the

Prophet, the volunteers marched towards the frontier. When he arrived in the vicinity of the Syrian border at Tabuk, he found no troops to oppose him; there were no signs of any impending danger, and learning that the Emperor had his hands full at home, he returned with his army to Medinah.

Hitherto the idolaters had freely performed their old idolatrous rites and ceremonies with the Moslems in the Kaabah. Mohammed perceived that the idolaters, if allowed to mix year after year with the Moslem pilgrims and perform the degrading ceremonies of their cultus, would soon nullify all his works which have been the sole cause of his being. In order, therefore, to remove once for all any possibility of a relapse into idolatry, he promulgated an ordinance which should strike straight at the heart of all idolatry and the immoralities attendant upon it. This was as follows:

"I. No idolater shall after this year come on a pilgrimage to the Kaabah.

"II. No one shall make the circuit of the Kaabah naked, as hitherto.

"III. Whoever has a treaty with the Prophet, it shall continue binding till its termination; for the rest, four months are allowed to every man to return to his

territories ; after that the Prophet will not consider himself bound to extend his protection to any except towards those with whom treaties have already been concluded."

And Ali was commissioned to read the Proclamation to the assembled multitudes on the day of the pilgrimage at Mecca. The vast concourse soon after returned to their homes and before the following year was over most of them were Moslems. "Idolatry, with its nameless abominations, was utterly destroyed. Islam furnishes the only solitary example of a great religion which, though preached among a nation and reigning for the most part among people not yet emerged from the twilight of an early civilisation, has succeeded in effectually restraining its votaries from idolatry."* And this has largely been due to the above seemingly harsh Proclamation of Moham-med.

* Syed Ameer Ali, *The Spirit of Islam*, p 210 London 1896.

CHAPTER X.

THE LAST DAYS OF MOHAMMED.

WHEN Mohammed saw men accepting Islam in (troops) he felt that his career was nearing its end.* He now resolved to perform a Farewell Pilgrimage to the city of his birth, and with this purpose he left Medinah with nearly 1,40,000 people.†

On his arrival at Mecca after completing the rites of pilgrimage, Mohammed addressed the multitude from the top of Mount Arafat in solemn last words :

“O ye people! hearken to my words, for I know not whether after this year I shall ever be amongst you here again.

“Your blood and your wealth and your property are sacred (and inviolable amongst one another), even as this day of yours is sacred in this your city during this month of yours.

“The Lord has ordained to every man the share of his inheritance; a testament is

* Koran, cx.

† This is known as *Hayat ul-Widaa*, or the “Farewell Pilgrimage,” and is taken as the model of a Moslem pilgrimage. It is, however, called in the Koran, ix 3, the *Hajj al-Akbar*, or the “Great Pilgrimage.” It is supposed to have commenced February 23, 632, A. C.

not lawful to the prejudice of heirs.

"Verily, all blood-vengeance of (the days of) Ignorance* is forbidden, (and all blood-feuds abolished), commencing with the bloodshed in (the days of) Ignorance of (my nephew Ayas), son of Rabiah, son of Harith, son of Abdul-Muttalib, who was confided for nursing to the family of Leith, and whom the tribe of Hudheil killed.

"No criminal shall be charged except for (the evil) that lies against him; and no father shall be charged with regard to his son, nor shall the son (be charged) with regard to his father.

"Verily, all usury of (the days of) Ignorance is forbidden: ye shall only have the capital of your money: wrong not, nor be ye wronged; and the usury of (my uncle) Abbas, all of it, is cancelled.

"Verily, a Moslem is brother to a Moslem; and nothing which belongs to his brother is lawful to a Moslem, unless what he acquires from him lawfully.

"A Moslem is brother to a Moslem: let him not wrong him, nor forsake him, nor despise him. It is evil enough for man to despise his brother Moslem. Everything that belongs to a Moslem—his wealth, his

* Pre-Islamic period in Arabia is generally so called.

blood, and his honour—issacred to a Moslem
Take care! let there be no commercial transaction against one another amongst you; but be ye all servants of God and brothers to one another.

“Ye men! ye have rights; and ye women! ye have rights. Husbands! love your wives and treat them kindly. Verily, ye have taken them on the security of God and have made their persons lawful to you by the Word of God. Mind ye that the thing most disliked by God is divorce.

“And of your slaves. Take care that ye feed them with such food as ye eat yourselves, and clothe them with the stuff ye wear, and order them not to do a thing beyond their power, and if ye do order such a thing ye must yourselves assist them in doing it.* Whoso among you beats his slave without fault or slaps him in the face, his atonement for this is freeing him; and mind ye that a man who behaves ill to his slave will be shut out from Paradise. Forgive thy ~~thy~~ slaves seventy times a day, for they are the servants of the Lord thy God and are not to be unjustly treated. Nothing pleases God more than the freeing of slaves.

“Ye shall surely meet your Lord, and

* Cf. *Sayings*, 845.

He will ask you concerning your works. Take care! ye do not return to unbelief after I am gone, striking off the necks of one another among you.

"Let him who is present tell it to him who is absent; haply he that is told may remember better than he who has heard it."*

Then looking up to the heaven, he cried, "O Lord! I have delivered my message and fulfilled my mission." And the multitude answered, "Yea, verily, hast thou!" "O Lord! I beseech Thee, bear Thou witness to it!" And he lifted up his hands, and blessed the people.

The Prophet soon after prepared to return with his followers to Medinah.

It was doubtless in view of his approaching end and in solicitude for the welfare of his relatives and friends after his death and especially of his favourite Ali, that he took occasion during a halt at a place called Khumm, to convoke an assembly of the people accompanying him and addressed to them a solemn adjuration.

"Ye believe," said he, "that there is no God but God, that Mohammed is the

* Cf. *Sayings*, 358, 629.

Prophet of God, that ye have to render an account of all your actions to God the King on the day of judgment."

They all answered, "Yea, verily we believe these things." He then adjured them solemnly by these articles of their faith ever to hold his family and especially Ali in love and reverence. "Ali," said he, "is to me what Aaron was to Moses; whoever loves me, let him receive Ali as his friend."

Then putting himself at the head of his pilgrim-army Mohammed set out on his return to Medinah.

He now settled himself to organize the provinces and tribal communities which had accepted Islam. Missionary-officers were sent to the provinces and to the tribes for the purpose of instructing them more fully in the duties of Islam and administering justice. Muadh, son of Jabal, was sent to Yeman, and Mohammed's parting injunction to him is worthy of more than ordinary attention. He was asked by Mohammed by what rule he would be guided in his administration of that province. "By the law of the Koran," said Muadh.

"But if thou find nothing (therein)?"

"Then I will act according to the example of the Prophet."

"But if thou find nothing in the example of the Prophet?"

"Then I will exercise my own judgment."

Whereupon Mohammed approved highly of the answer of his disciple, and commended it to the other delegates.*

To Ali, whom he deputed to Yemamah, he said: "When two parties come before you for justice, do not decide before ye have heard them both."

Soon after this the health of the Prophet (continued) to decline. At the news of his approaching end, two pretenders stood up claiming divine commission for their reign of licentiousness and plunder. One was Aihalah son of Kaab, better known as Al-Aswad, the other Abu-Thumamah Harun son of Halib, commonly called Museilamah.

Aihalah, a quick-witted man gifted with persuasive eloquence, was originally an idolater, then a convert to Islam, from which he seceded to set up for a prophet.† Being versed in juggling arts and natural

* *Sayings*, 363.

† He belonged to the tribe of Aus, of which he was an influential chief. He was surnamed *Dhut-Himar*, or the "Master of the Ass," because he used frequently to say, "The Master of the Ass is coming to me," and he pretended to receive his revelations from two angels named Soheik and Shoreik.

magic, he astonished and confounded the multitude with spectral illusions which he passed off as miracles. His schemes for a time were crowned with success. But soon his whole efforts came to naught, and he fell a victim to the vengeance of some people whose relatives he had killed.

Abu-Thumamah Harun belonged to the tribe of Huneifah who inhabited the province of Yemamah, and was a principal man among them. He headed an embassy sent by his tribe to Mohammed in the ninth year of the Hegirah, and professed Islam; but on his return home, considering he might share with Mohammed in his power, the next year he set up for a prophet. Being a man of influence and address, he soon made hosts of converts among his credulous countrymen, and about this time he sent a letter to Mohammed offering to go halves with him. It ran thus:—

“From Museilamah the Prophet of God to Mohammed the Prophet of God. I am your partner; the power must be divided between us: let half the earth be mine, and the other half thine.”

To which Mohammed sent his reply in the following memorable words: “From Mohammed the Prophet of God to Museilamah the Liar. Peace be upon those

who follow the straight path! The earth belongs to God alone: He bestows it upon whom He pleases. Only those prosper who fear the Lord!"

The Prophet though weak and feeble always presided at the public prayers until within three days of his death. One (noon at) night, he passed through the dark and silent city where all were sunk in sleep, to the great burying-ground outside of the walls. Arrived in the midst of the tombs, he lifted up his voice and made a solemn apostrophe to their tenants: "Peace be upon you, ye people of the graves! God pardon us and you! Peaceful be the morning to which ye shall awaken, and happy your condition! Ye have passed on before us, and we are to follow you."

The next day he was aided in repairing to the mosque by his two cousins Ali and Fadl, the son of Abbas. After his usual prayers, he thus addressed the multitude: "Moslems! if I have wronged any one of you, here am I to answer for it; if I owe anything to any one of you, all I may happen to possess belongs to you."

Upon this, a man in the crowd reminded Mohammed of three dirhams of silver which he had given to a poor man at the Prophet's request, and was instantly repaid

with interest. "Better," said Mohammed, "to blush in this world than suffer in the next."

He then prayed fervently for the Moslems who had suffered for their faith; after which he addressed the Exiles of Mecca exhorting them to hold in honour the Helpers of Medinah. "The number of believers," he said, "will increase, but that of the Helpers never can: they were my family with whom I found a home, they believed in me when I was persecuted by the world."

Mohammed's malady increased from day to day. On Friday, the day of religious assemblage, he requested Abu-Bakr to perform the public prayers. The appearance of Abu-Bakr in the pulpit caused great agitation among the Moslems, and a rumour was circulated that the Prophet was no more. On hearing the news, Mohammed exerted his remaining strength, and leaning on the shoulders of Ali and Fadl, he made his way into the mosque, "where his appearance," says the chronicler, "spread joy throughout the congregation." Abu-Bakr ceased to pray, but Mohammed bade him proceed, and after the prayers were over thus addressed the congregation. "I have heard," said he, "that a rumour of the death of your prophet filled you with alarm; but has any

prophet before me lived for ever that ye think I should not leave you? Everything has its appointed time which is not to be hastened nor avoided. I return to Him who sent me, and my last request to you is that ye remain united, that ye love, honour and uphold each other in what shall be reasonable, that ye exhort each other to faith and constancy in belief, and to the performance of righteous deeds: by these alone men prosper—all else leads to destruction."

In concluding his exhortation, he read out the following verse of the Koran :

"(As to) that abode of the hereafter—God will give it to those who seek not to exalt themselves in the earth, or to do wrong ; and the (happy) issue shall attend those who fear to do wrong."*

These were the last words Mohammed spoke in public; he was again conducted back by Ali and Fadl to the dwelling of Ayesha which was close to the mosque.

After this, at noon of Monday the 12th of Rabi I. of the 11th year of the Hegirah—corresponding to the 8th of June 632 A. C.—while praying earnestly within himself, the noble spirit of the great Prophet

* Koran, xxviii. 83.

escaped into the "blessed companionship on high."

And here the life of Mohammed ends; here ends the life of the only man mentioned by history who was at once a preacher and a [sovrain] mightier than the mightiest of the earth.

CHAPTER XI.

PERSON AND CHARACTER OF MOHAMMED.

MOHAMMED is described as of middle stature, rather thin, but broad of shoulders, wide of chest, strong of bone and muscle. His head was (capacious) well-shaped, and well-set on a neck which rose like a pillar from his ample chest. Dark hair, slightly curled, flowed in a dense mass almost to his shoulders. He had an oval face, slightly tawny of colour, marked and expressive features, a slightly aquiline nose, black eyes which shone out from under heavy eyelashes, a mouth large and flexible, indicative of eloquence; teeth, well-set and dazzling white. A full beard framed his manly face. His skin was clear and soft, his complexion 'red and white,' his hands were as 'silk and satin,' even as those of a woman. His step was quick and elastic, yet firm. In turning his face he would also turn his whole body. His whole gait and presence were dignified and imposing. His countenance was mild and pensive. His laugh was rarely more than a smile which was of the most captivating sweetness.

In his habits he was extremely simple.

His eating and drinking, his dress and his furniture retained even when he reached the plenitude of his power, their primitive simplicity.

“His constitution was extremely delicate. . . . Eminently unpractical in all common things of life, he was gifted with mighty powers of imagination, elevation of mind, delicacy and refinement of feeling. ‘He is more modest than a virgin behind her curtain,’ it was said of him. He was most indulgent to his inferiors, and would never allow his awkward little page to be scolded whatever he did. ‘Ten years,’ said Anas, his servant, ‘was I about the Prophet, and he never said as much as “Uff” to me.’ He was very affectionate towards his family. One of his boys died on his breast in the smoky house of the nurse, a blacksmith’s wife. He was very fond of children; he would stop them in the streets and pat their little heads. He never struck any one in his life. The worst expression he ever made use of in conversation was, ‘What has come to him? May his forehead be darkened with mud!’ When asked to curse some one, he replied, ‘I have not been sent to curse but to be a mercy to mankind.’ ‘He visited the sick, followed any bier he met, accepted the invitation of

a slave to dinner, mended his own clothes, milked the goats, and waited upon himself." relates summarily another tradition. He never first withdrew his hand out of another man's palm, and turned not before the other had turned.

"He was the most faithful protector of those he protected, the sweetest and most agreeable in conversation. Those who saw him were suddenly filled with reverence; those who came near him loved him; they who described him would say, 'I have never seen his like either before or after.' He was of great taciturnity, but when he spoke it was with emphasis and deliberation, and no one could forget what he said. He was, however, very nervous and restless withal; often low-spirited, down-cast, as to heart and eyes. Yet he would at times suddenly break through these broodings, become gay, talkative, jokular, chiefly among his own. . . He would romp with the children and play with their toys.

"He lived with his wives in a row of humble cottages, separated from one another by palm-branches, cemented together with mud. He would kindle the fire, sweep the floor, and milk the goats himself. The little food he had was always shared with those who dropped in to partake of it. . . .

His ordinary food was dates and water, or barley bread; milk and honey were luxuries of which he was fond, but which he rarely allowed himself. The fare of the desert seemed most congenial to him, even when he was sovereign of Arabia."*

"There is something," says Lane-Poole, "so tender and womanly, and withal so heroic, about the man, that one is in peril of finding the judgment unconsciously blinded by the feeling of reverence and well-nigh love that such a nature inspires. He who, standing alone, braved for years the hatred of his people, is the same who was never the first to withdrew his hand from another's clasp; the beloved of children, who never passed a group of little ones without a smile from his wonderful eyes and a kind word for them, sounding all the kinder in that sweet-toned voice. The frank friendship, the noble generosity, the dauntless courage and hope of the man, all tend to melt criticism in admiration.

"He was an enthusiast in that noblest sense when enthusiasm becomes the salt of the earth, the one thing that keeps men from rotting whilst they live. Enthusiasm

* Stanley Lane-Poole, quoted from E. Deutsch, *Literary Remains*, p. 70, ff; and R. Bosworth Smith, *Mohammed and Mohammedanism*, 2nd edn., p. 131.

is often used despitely, because it is joined to an unworthy cause, or falls upon barren ground and bears no fruit. So was it not with Mohammed. He was an enthusiast when enthusiasm was the one thing needed to set the world aflame, and his enthusiasm was noble for a noble cause. He was one of those happy few who have attained the supreme joy of making one great truth their very life-spring. He was the messenger of the one God; and never to his life's end did he forget who he was, or the message which was the marrow of his being. He brought his tidings to his people with a grand dignity sprung from the consciousness of his high office, together with a most sweet humility, whose roots lay in the knowledge of his own weakness."

On the graces and intellectual gifts of Nature to the son of Abdullah, the Arabian writers dwell with the proudest and fondest satisfaction. His politeness to the great, his affability to the humble, and his dignified bearing to the presumptuous, procured him respect, admiration and applause. His talents were equally fitted for persuasion or command. Deeply read in the volume of Nature, though almost ignorant of letters, his mind could expand into controversy with the acutest of his enemies, or

contract itself to the apprehension of the meanest of his disciples. His simple eloquence, rendered impressive by the expression of a countenance wherein awfulness of majesty was tempered by an amiable sweetness, excited emotions of veneration and love; and he was gifted with that authoritative air of genius which alike influences the learned and commands the illiterate. As a friend and a parent, he exhibited the softest feelings of our nature; but while in possession of the kind and generous emotions of the heart, and engaged in the discharge of most of the social and domestic duties, he disgraced not his title of an apostle of God. With all that simplicity which is so natural to a great mind, he performed the humbler offices whose homeliness it would be idle to conceal with pompous diction. "God," say the Moslem writers, "offered him the keys of the treasures of the earth, but he would not accept them."

CHAPTER XII.

SOME REFLECTIONS ON HIS CAREER.

THE question now occurs, Was he the unprincipled impostor that he has been so commonly represented? Were all his visions and revelations deliberate falsehoods, and was his whole system a tissue of deceit? "Our current hypothesis about Mahomet," said Carlyle, "that he was a scheming Impostor, a Falsehood incarnate, that his religion is a mere mass of quackery and fatuity, begins really to be now untenable to any one. The lies, which well-meaning zeal has heaped round this man, are disgraceful to ourselves only. When Pococke inquired of Grotius, where the proof was of that story of the pigeon, trained to pick peas from Mahomet's ear, and pass for an angel dictating to him? Grotius answered that there was no proof! It is really time to dismiss all that. The word this man spoke has been the life-guidance now of a hundred-and-eighty millions of men these twelve-hundred years. These hundred-and-eighty millions were made by God as well as we. A greater number of God's creatures believe in Mahomet's word at this

hour than in any other word whatever. Are we to suppose that it was a miserable piece of spiritual legerdemain, this which so many creatures of the Almighty have lived by and died by? I for my part, cannot form any such supposition. I will believe most things sooner than that. One would be entirely at a loss what to think of this world at all, if quackery so grew and were sanctioned here.

“Alas, such theories are very lamentable. If we would attain to knowledge of anything in God’s true Creation, let us disbelieve them wholly! They are the product of an Age of Scepticism; they indicate the saddest spiritual paralysis, and mere death-life of the souls of men; more godless theory, I think, was never promulgated in this Earth. A false man found a religion? Why, a false man cannot build a brick house? If he do not know and follow *truly* the properties of mortar, burnt clay and what else he works in, it is no house that he makes, but a rubbish-heap. It will not stand for twelve centuries, to lodge a hundred and eighty millions; it will fall straightway. A man must conform himself to Nature’s laws, be verily in communion with Nature and the truth of things, or Nature will answer him, No, not at all! Speciosities are specious—ah

me!—a Cagliostro, many Cagliostros, prominent world-leaders, do prosper by their quackery, for a day. It is like a forged bank note; they get it passed out of *their* worthless hands—others, not they, have to smart for it. Nature bursts up in fire-flames, French Revolutions and such-like, proclaiming with terrible veracity that forged notes are forged.

“But of a Great Man especially, of him I will venture to assert that it is incredible he should have been other than true. . .

“This Mahomet, then, we will in no wise consider as an Inanity and Theatricality, a poor conscious ambitious schemer; we cannot conceive him so. . . . The man’s words were not false, nor his workings here below; no Inanity and Simulacrum; a fiery mass of Life cast up from the great bosom of Nature herself. To *kindle* the world; the world’s Maker had ordered it so.”*

Let us endeavour to perceive what adequate object he could have to gain by the impious and stupendous imposture with which he stands charged. Was it riches? His marriage with Khadijah had already made him wealthy, and for years

* Thomas Carlyle, *On Heroes, Hero worship, and the Heroic in History*, lecture II.

preceding his 'pretended vision' he had manifested no desire to increase his store. Was it distinction? He already stood high in his native place as a man of intelligence and probity. He was of the illustrious tribe of the Koreish, and of the most honoured branch of that tribe. Was it power? The guardianship of the Kaabah, and with it the command of the sacred city, had been for generations in his immediate family, and his situation and circumstances entitled him to look forward with confidence to that exalted trust. In attempting to subvert the faith in which he had been brought up, he struck at the very root of all these advantages. On that faith were founded the fortunes and dignities of his family. To assail it must draw on himself the hostility of his kindred, the indignation of his fellow-citizens, and the horror and odium of all his countrymen who were worshippers at the Kaabah. Was there anything brilliant in the outset of his prophetic career to repay him for these sacrifices, and to lure him on? On the contrary, it was begun in doubt and secrecy. For years together it was not attended by any material success. In proportion as he made known his doctrines and proclaimed his revelations, they sub-

jected him to ridicule, scorn, obloquy, and finally to an inveterate persecution; which ruined the fortunes of himself and his friends; compelled some of his family and followers to take refuge in a foreign land; obliged him to hide from sight in his native city, and drove him forth a fugitive to seek an uncertain home elsewhere. Why should he persist for years in a course of imposture which was thus prostrating all his worldly fortunes at a time of life when it was too late to build them up anew? *

“Ah no:” says Carlyle, “this deep-hearted Son of the Wilderness, with his beaming black eyes and open social deep soul, had other thoughts than ambition. A silent great man; he was one of those who cannot *but* be in earnest; whom Nature herself has appointed to be sincere. While others walk in formulas and hearsays, contented enough to dwell there, this man could not screen himself in formulas; he was alone with his own soul and the reality of things. The great Mystery of Existence, as I said, glared-in upon him, with its terrors, with its splendours; no hearsays could hide that unspeakable fact, ‘Here am I!’ Such *sincerity*, as we named it, has in

* From Washington Irving, *Life of Mahomet*.

very truth something of divine. The word of such a man is a Voice direct from Nature's own Heart. Men do and must listen to that as to nothing else;—all else is wind in comparison. From of old, a thousand thoughts, in his pilgrimings and wanderings, had been in this man: What am I? What is this unfathomable Thing I live in, which men name Universe? What is Life; what is Death? What am I to believe? What am I to do? The grim rocks of Mount Hara, of Mount Sinai, the stern sandy solitudes answered not. The great Heaven rolling silent overhead, with its blue-glancing stars, answered not. There was no answer. The man's own soul, and what of God's inspiration dwelt there, had to answer!"

And what have been the effects of the system which established by such instrumentality, Mohammed has left behind him?

"We may freely concede," says Sir William Muir, "that it banished for ever many of the darker elements of superstition which had for ages shrouded the Peninsula. Idolatry vanished before the battle-cry of Islam; the doctrine of the unity and infinite perfections of God, and of a special all-pervading Providence, became a living principle

in the hearts and lives of the followers of Mahomet, even as it had in his own. An absolute surrender and submission to the divine will (the very name of *Islam*) was demanded as the first requirement of the religion. Nor are social virtues wanting. Brotherly love is inculcated within the circle of the faith; orphans are to be protected, and slaves treated with consideration; intoxicating drinks are prohibited, and Mahometanism may boast of a degree of temperance unknown to any other creed."*

"His beneficial or pernicious influence on the public happiness," says Gibbon, "is the last consideration in the character of Mahomet. The most bitter or most bigoted of his Christian or Jewish foes will surely allow that he assumed a false commission to inculcate a salutary doctrine, less perfect only than their own. He piously supposed, as the basis of his religion, the truth and sanctity of *their* prior revelations, the virtues and miracles of their founders. The idols of Arabia were broken before the throne of God; the blood of human victims was expiated by prayer, and fasting, and alms, the laudable or innocent arts of devo-

* Muir, *The Life of Mahomet*, vol iv pp. 320, 321.

tion; and his rewards and punishments of a future life were painted by the images most congenial to an ignorant and carnal generation. Mahomet was, perhaps, incapable of dictating a moral and political system for the use of his countrymen: but he breathed among the faithful a spirit of charity and friendship; recommended the practice of social virtues; and checked by his laws and precepts the thirst of revenge, and the oppression of widows and orphans. The hostile tribes were united in faith and obedience."

"The aim of Mahomet," says the Rev. Stephens, "was to revive among his countrymen the Arabs, as Moses revived among his countrymen the Jews, the pure faith of their common forefather Abraham. In this he succeeded to a very great extent. For a confused heap of idolatrous superstitions he substituted a pure monotheistic faith; he abolished some of the most vicious practices of his countrymen, modified others; he generally raised the moral standard, improved the social condition of the people, and introduced a sober and rational ceremonial in worship. Finally he welded by this means a number of wild and independent tribes, mere floating atoms, into a compact body politic, as well prepared

and as eager to subdue the kingdoms of the world to their rule and to their faith, as ever the Israelites had been to conquer the land of Canaan.*

* * * *

“The Koran also enjoins repeatedly and in very emphatic language the duty of showing kindness to the stranger and the orphan, and of treating slaves, if converted to the faith, with the consideration and respect due to believers. The duty of mercy to the lower animals is not forgotten, and it is to be thankfully acknowledged that Moham-
medanism as well as Buddhism shares with Christianity the honour of having given birth to hospitals and asylums for the insane and sick.†

* * * *

“The vices most prevalent in Arabia in the time of Mahomet which are most sternly denounced and absolutely forbidden in the Koran were drunkenness, unlimited concubinage and polygamy, the destruction of female infants, reckless gambling, extortionate usury, superstitious arts of divination and magic. The abolition of some of these evil customs, and the mitigation of others,

* W R W. Stephens, *Christianity and Islam the Bible and the Koran*, p. 94 London 1877.

† *Ibid*, p 104

was a great advance in the morality of the Arabs, and is a wonderful and honourable testimony to the zeal and influence of the reformer. The total suppression of female infanticide and of drunkenness is the most signal triumph of his work."*

"First of all," continues the writer we are quoting, "it must be freely granted that to his own people Mahomet was a great benefactor. He was born in a country where political organization and rational faith, and pure morals were unknown. He introduced all three. By a single stroke of masterly genius he simultaneously reformed the political condition, the religious creed, and the moral practice of his countrymen. In the place of many independent tribes he left a nation; for a superstitious belief in gods many and lords many he established a reasonable belief in one Almighty yet beneficent Being; taught men to live under an abiding sense of this Being's superintending care, to look to Him as the rewarder, and to fear Him as the punisher of evil-doers. He vigorously attacked, and modified and suppressed many gross and revolting customs which had prevailed in Arabia down to his time. For an abandoned profligacy was

† *Ibid*, p. 112.

substituted a carefully regulated polygamy, and the practice of destroying female infants was effectually abolished.

"As Islam gradually extended its conquest beyond the boundaries of Arabia, many barbarous races whom it absorbed became in like manner participators in its benefits. The Turk, the Indian, the Negro, and the Moor, were compelled to cast away their idols, to abandon their licentious rites and customs, to turn to the worship of one God, to a decent ceremonial and an orderly way of life. The faith even of the more enlightened Persian was purified: he learned that good and evil are not co-ordinate powers, but that just and unjust are alike under the sway of one All-wise and Holy Ruler, who ordereth all things in heaven and earth.

"For barbarous nations, then, especially nations which were more or less in the condition of Arabia itself at the time of Mahomet—nations in the condition of Africa at the present day, with little or no civilization, and without a reasonable religion—Islam certainly comes as a blessing, as a turning from darkness to light, and from the power of satan unto God."^{*}

^{*} *Ibid*, pp 129, 130.

Another Christian writer* thus expresses himself :—

“On the other hand, to those who are prepared to shake off superstitions, Mohammedanism offers a very rational religion. The reign of uniform law in the natural world is expressed in the unity of God—one over-ruling Providence. The high character attributes of the great God are recognized by the total abolition of all the forms of worship which presume deity of human tastes and passions—not only images and paintings, but music and ecclesiasticism of all kinds go by the board. There is nothing but a simple rational worship, in or out of simple edifices. Decency and sobriety of life are inculcated, drink is prohibited, the equality of man is preached in an attractive form, and good conduct in this world is rewarded by an intelligible Paradise in the next. Such a religion commends itself very readily to people in want of a faith.

* * * *

“Mohammedanism came upon the world as a kind of reformed Christianity—a protest against the corruption of Christianity—a purer faith founded on the old models, a return to the old standards. . . . But

* In *The Asiatic Quarterly Review*, October 1888.

it had all the reasonableness in contrast to the gross superstitions of the age which has already been attributed to it, and brought out, as it were, by a very enterprising and enthusiastic people, it is to be hardly wondered that it had a great success. . . . When the Mohammedans annexed the civilized countries of Graeco-Roman Empire they also inherited the civilization and learning of that Empire. Hence it was that they gave to the world not only a better religion, but laws, science, and literature, when our ancestors were still quite barbarous. Thus everything facilitated their constant progress for upwards of a thousand years after the institution of the Mohammedan religion, and they still progress in the less-civilized regions of the earth."

"It is very difficult to say," continues the writer, "exactly what the Mohammedan religion is. . . . Certainly, it seems to be very effective in rendering men's lives and manners outwardly decent and respectable. It has this very great advantage, that having no difficult creed, exacting no beliefs *prima facie* repulsive to reason and commonsense, there is among Mohammedans very little tendency towards infidelity. . . .

"Probably it is to the prohibition of the

use of alcohol that the outward decency of Mohammedans, as compared to Christians, is due. It is drink that debases and degrades so large a part of our lower Christian populations. We not only have no prohibition of drink, but we in some sort sanctify it by its use in our so-called sacraments. That use of wine as representing the blood of Christ (to which we attribute such extraordinary virtue) is not only a very low form of superstition, but greatly increases the difficulty of dealing with the liquor question."

"It cannot be said," adds the writer pertinently, "that Mohammedans never drink, but they really rarely do so. It cannot be said that there are not many bad Mohammedans given to many vices, especially among semi-converted races of a rude character; but, take them all in all, the population of civilized Mohammedan countries have a comparatively decorous mien and manner. Their faults are those principally of the ages in which Mohammedanism was matured, while our virtues are rather those of our age than of our religion."

The following remarks at the Church Congress, Wolverhampton, may also be read with interest by all candid readers:—

"The Rev. Canon Isaac Taylor said that

over a large portion of the world Islamism as a missionary religion is more successful than Christianity. (*Sensation.*) Not only are the Moslem converts from paganism more numerous than the Christian converts, but Christianity in some regions is actually receding before Islam, while attempts to proselytize Mohammedan nations are notoriously unsuccessful. We not only do not gain ground, but even fail to hold our own. The faith of Islam extends from Morocco to Java, from Zanzibar to China, and is spreading across Africa with giant strides. It has acquired a footing on the Congo and the Zambesi, while Uganda, the most powerful of the negro states, has just become Mohammedan. In India, western civilization, which is sapping Hindooism, only prepares the way for Islam. Of the 255 millions in India, 50 millions are already Moslems,*

* The number has gone up to 70 millions. A learned Hindu writer thus speaks of the two communities as they stand to-day. "The Mahomedans have a future, and they believe in it—we Hindus have no conception of it. Time is with them—time is against us. At the end of the year they count their gains, we calculate our losses. They are growing in strength, growing in wealth, growing in solidarity, we are crumbling to pieces. They look forward to a united Mahomedan world—we are waiting for our extinction"—Lieut.-Col. Dr. U. N. Mukerji, *A Dying Race*, p. 97. Calcutta 1909. Elsewhere he admits: "The superiority of the bulk

and of the whole population of Africa more than half. It is not the first propagation of Islam that has to be explained, but it is the permanency with which it retains its hold upon its converts. Christianity is less tenacious in its grasp. While in India and Africa it is receding before Islam, and in Jamaica the negroes, nominally Christian, are lapsing into Oboeism, it may be affirmed that an African tribe, once converted to Islam, never reverts to paganism, and never embraces Christianity. . . .

“Islam has done more for civilization than Christianity. I confess I am somewhat suspicious of the accounts of missionaries; but take the statements of English officials, or of lay travellers, such as Burton, Pope Hennessy, Galton, Palgrave, Thompson, or Reade, as to the practical results of Islam. When Mohammedanism is embraced by a negro tribe, paganism, devil-worship, fetishism, cannibalism, human-sacrifice, infanticide, witchcraft, at once disappear. The natives begin to dress, filth is replaced by cleanliness, and they acquire personal dignity and self-respect. Hospi-

of the Mahomedans is entirely due to their religious revival and the systematic moral training that they impart to every member of their community.” — p. 94.

tality becomes a religious duty, drunkenness becomes rare, gambling is forbidden, immodest dances and the promiscuous intercourse of the sexes cease, female chastity is regarded as a virtue, industry replaces idleness, licence gives place to law, order and sobriety prevail, blood-feuds, cruelty to animals and to slaves, are forbidden. A feeling of humanity, benevolence and brotherhood is inculcated. Polygamy and slavery are regulated and their evils are restrained. Islam, above all, is the most powerful total abstinence association in the world, whereas the extension of European trade means the extension of drunkenness and vice, and the degradation of the people; while Islam introduces a civilization of no low order, including a knowledge of reading and writing, decent clothing, personal cleanliness, veracity and self-respect. Its restraining and civilizing effects are marvellous. How little have we to show for the vast sums of money and all the precious lives lavished upon Africa! Christian converts are reckoned by thousands, Moslem converts by millions. These are the stern facts we have to face. They are extremely unpleasant facts; it is folly to ignore them. . . Islam was a replica of the faith of Abraham and Moses, with

Christian elements. Judaism was exclusive. Islam is cosmopolitan—not like Judaism, confined to one race, but extended to the whole world. . . . There is nothing in the teaching of Mohammed antagonistic to Christianity. It is midway between Judaism and Christianity. This reformed Judaism swept so swiftly over Africa and Asia because the African and Syrian doctors had substituted metaphysical dogmas for the religion of Christ. They tried to combat licentiousness by celibacy and virginity. Seclusion from the world was the road to holiness, and dirt was the characteristic of monkish sanctity. The people were practically polytheists, worshipping a crowd of martyrs, saints and angels. Islam swept away this mass of corruption and superstition. It was a revolt against empty theological polemics; it was a masculine protest against the exaltation of celibacy as a crown of piety. It brought out the fundamental dogma of religion—the unity and greatness of God. It replaced monkiness by manliness. It gave hope to the slave, brotherhood to mankind, and recognition to the fundamental facts of human nature . . . The virtues which Islam inculcates are what the lower races can be brought to understand—temperance, cleanliness, chastity, justice, forti-

tude, courage, benevolence, hospitality, veracity, and resignation. They can be taught to cultivate the four cardinal virtues, and to abjure the seven deadly sins. The Christian *ideal* of the brotherhood of man is the highest; but Islam preaches a *practical* brotherhood—the social equality of all Moslems. This is the great bribe which Islam offers. The convert is admitted at once to an exclusive social caste; he becomes a member of a vast confraternity of 150,000,000. A Christian convert is not regarded as a social equal, but the Moslem brotherhood is a reality. We have overmuch ‘dearly beloved brethren’ in the reading desk, but very little in daily life. . . .

“Let us remember that in some respects Moslem morality is better than our own. In resignation to God’s will, in temperance, charity, veracity, and in the brotherhood of believers, they set us a pattern we should do well to follow. Islam has abolished drunkenness, gambling, and prostitution—the three curses of Christian lands.”*

Is it possible to conceive, we may ask, that the man who effected such great and

* This was reported in, among other papers, *The Times*, and *St. James Gazette*, London, October 8, 1887.

lasting reforms in his own country by substituting the worship of the one God for the gross and debasing idolatry in which his countrymen had been plunged for ages ; who raised the moral standard of his countrymen, ameliorated the condition of women, curtailed and mitigated polygamy and slavery, and virtually abolished them as well as infanticide ; who most sternly denounced and absolutely forbade all the heinous evils of the Arab society ; who infused vitality into a dormant people, consolidated a congeries of warring tribes into a nation inspired into action with the hope of ever-lasting life ; who ‘ concentrated into a focus all the fragmentary and broken lights which had ever fallen on the heart of man ; ’ who performed his work with an enthusiasm and fervour which admitted no compromise, conceived no halting, with indomitable courage which brooked no resistance, allowed no fear of consequences, with a singleness of purpose which thought of no self—can we, we repeat, conceive so great and zealous a reformer to have been a mere impostor, or that his whole career was one of sheer hypocrisy ? Can we imagine that his divine mission was a mere invention of his own of whose falsehood he was conscious throughout ? Is not the theory of

imposture refuted alike by his unwavering belief in the truth of his own mission, by the loyalty and unshaken confidence of his companions, who had ample opportunity of forming a right estimate of his sincerity, and finally, by the magnitude of the task which he brought to so successful an issue? May we not say that no impostor could have accomplished so mighty a work, that no one unsupported by a living faith in the reality of his commission, in the goodness of his cause, could have maintained the same consistent attitude through long years of adverse fortune, alike in the day of victory and in the hour of defeat, in the plenitude of his power and at the moment of death?

“But so far,” remarked Dr. Leitner, “as I know anything either of Judaism or of Christianity, the system preached by Muhammad was not merely imitative or eclectic; it was also ‘inspired,’—if there be such a process as inspiration from the Source of all goodness. Indeed, I venture to state in all humility, that if self-sacrifice, honesty of purpose, unwavering belief in one’s mission, a marvellous insight into existing wrong or error, and the perception and use of the best means for their removal, are among the outward and visible signs of

inspiration, the mission of Muhammad was 'inspired.'"

The Rev. Dr. Marcus Dods' remarks are equally strong :

"But is Mohammed in no sense a prophet? Certainly he had two of the most important characteristics of the prophetic order. He saw truth about God which his fellow-men did not see, and he had an irresistible inward impulse to publish this truth. In respect of this latter qualification, Mohammed may stand in comparison with the most courageous of the heroic prophets of Israel. For the truth's sake he risked his life, he suffered daily persecution for years, and eventually banishment, the loss of property, of the goodwill of his fellow-citizens, and of the confidence of his friends; he suffered, in short, as much as any man can suffer short of death, which he only escaped by flight, and yet he unflinchingly proclaimed his message. No bribe, threat, or inducement, could silence him. 'Though they array against me the sun on the right hand and the moon on the left, I cannot renounce my purpose.' And it was this persistency, this belief in his call, to proclaim the unity of God, which was the making of Islam.

"Other men have been monotheists in the midst of idolaters, but no other man

has founded a strong and enduring monotheistic religion. The distinction in his case was his resolution that other men should believe. If we ask what it was that made Mohammed aggressive and proselytizing, where other men had been content to cherish a solitary faith, we must answer that it was nothing else than the depth and force of his own conviction of the truth. To himself the difference between one God and many, between the unseen Creator and these ugly lumps of stone or wood, was simply infinite. The one creed was death and darkness to him, the other life and light. . . . Who can doubt the earnestness of that search after truth and the living God, that drove the affluent merchant from his comfortable home and his fond wife, to make his abode for months at a time in the dismal cave on Mount Hira? If we respect the shrinking of Isaiah or Jeremiah from the heavy task of proclaiming unwelcome truth, we must also respect the keen sensitiveness of Mohammed, who was so burdened by this same responsibility, and so persuaded of his incompetency for the task, that at times he thought his new feelings and thoughts were a snare of the Devil, and at times he would fain have rid himself of all further struggle by casting

himself from a friendly precipice. . . .

“His giving himself out as a prophet of God was, in the first instance, not only sincere, but probably correct in the sense in which he himself understood it.”* . . .

“Head of the State as well as of the Church,” says the Rev. Bosworth-Smith, “he was Caesar and Pope in one; but he was Pope without Pope’s pretensions, Caesar without the legions of Caesar. Without a standing army, without a body-guard, without a palace, without a fixed revenue, if ever any man had the right to say that he ruled by a right divine; it was Mohammed, for he had all the power without its instruments, and without its supports.

“By a fortune absolutely unique in history, Mohammed is a three-fold founder—of a nation, of an empire, and of a religion. Illiterate himself, scarcely able to read or write, he was yet the author of a book which is a poem, a code of laws, a Book of Common Prayer, and a Bible in one, and is revered to this day by a sixth of the whole human race, as a miracle of purity of style, of wisdom, and of truth. It was the one miracle claimed by Mohammed—his standing miracle he called it; and a miracle

* Dods, *Mohammed, Buddha and Christ*, pp. 17, 18.

indeed it is. But looking at the circumstances of the time, at the unbounded reverence of his followers, and comparing him with the Fathers of the Church or with mediaeval saints, to my mind the most miraculous thing about Mohammed is, that he never claimed the power of working miracles. Whatever he had said he could do, his disciples would straightway have seen him do. They could not help attributing to him miraculous acts which he never did, and which he always denied he could do. What more crowning proof of his sincerity is needed? Mohammed to the end of his life claimed for himself that title only with which he had begun, and which the highest philosophy and the truest Christianity will one day, I venture to believe, agree in yielding to him, that of a Prophet, a very Prophet of God.”*

* Bosworth-Smith, *Mohammed and Mohammedanism*, p 340.

CHAPTER XIII.

ISLAM.

I said, 'What is Islam?' The Prophet said, 'Parity of speech and hospitality.'

I said, 'And what is faith?' He said, 'Patience and beneficence.'

—Amru b Abasah.*

A man said, 'O Prophet of God! what is (the mark of) faith?' The Prophet said, 'When thy good work gives thee pleasure, and thy evil work grieves thee, thou art a man of faith.' The man said, 'And what is sin?' The Prophet said, 'When anything smites thee within thyself, forsake it.'

—Abu-Umamah.†

ITS SIGNIFICANCE.

THE root *salama*, from which *Islam* is formed, in the first and fourth conjugations, signifies, in the first instance, to be tranquil, at rest, to have done one's duty, to have paid up, to be at perfect peace, and, finally, to surrender oneself to him with whom peace is made. The noun derived from it means, peace, greeting, safety, salvation. "The word," says Deutsch, "thus implies absolute submission to God's will—as generally assumed—neither in the first instance, nor exclusively, but means, on the contrary, striving after righteousness with one's own

* *Sayings*, 217.

† *Ibid.*

strength."*

ITS IDEA OF RELIGION.

Mohammed regarded religion as a straight, natural law, for men to follow, wherein was no perplexity or ambiguity; and he even taught that all the children of men would follow the same straight way were it not for the corrupting influences of their guardians, who consciously or unconsciously set an unnatural example by their way of life for their little folks to follow. Thus early in Islam, Mohammed did away with the baptismal, and in fact all cere-

* "Closely connected," continues he, "with the misapprehension of this part of Mohammed's original doctrine is also the popular notion on that supposed bane of Islam, Fatalism, but we must content ourselves here with the observation that, as far as Mohammed and the Koran are concerned, Fatalism is an utter and absolute invention. Not once, but repeatedly, and as if to guard against such an assumption, Mohammed denies it as distinctly as he can, and gives injunctions which show as indisputably as can be that nothing was further from his mind than that pious state of idle and hopeless inactivity and stagnation." Elsewhere the same learned writer says, "It (the Koran) teaches the very contrary doctrine. Mohammed's whole system is one of faith built on hope and fear. Nor did the word Islam originally betoken that absolute and blind submission which it afterwards came to mean, but rather the being at peace and living in accordance with God's words and commands, leading the life of a righteous man: in the sense in which the derivatives of the Semitic *Salam* occur in early Aramaic."

monies in the hands of a designing priesthood. According to Mohammed, religion was the natural bent of a free, unbiased mind, and man the vice-gerent of God on earth in a very real sense, inspired of his Master to know the good and refuse the evil; and only when he refused to follow out the highest and the best and deliberately chose the lower and the worse road did he approximate to the lowest brute.*

"Set thou," says the Koran, "thy face steadfast towards religion as one upright, the constitution of God whereon He has constituted men; there is no change in the creation of God. That is the standard religion, but most men do not know."†

"The baptism of God (we have); and who is better than God at baptizing? Him we serve.‡ "We are of God, and to Him shall we return."§

His religion thus stands forth free of all mysteries and articles of faith on dubious subjects

"And if thou follow most of those who are in the earth, they will lead thee aside from the way of God: they only follow an opinion, and they only conjecture."||

* Koran xcvi. 1-8.
§ lb. 156.

† xxx 30.
|| vi. 116.

‡ ii. 138.

The religion of the former prophets was not a creed-bound dogma but a life of earnest faithful work : “ Do ye say, Verily Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the tribes were Jews or Christians ? ” * “ Abraham was not a Jew nor a Christian, but he was an upright man and a Moslem, and he was not of those who joined others with God. ” †

According to Mohammed, men were originally of one religion (which he named *Islam*), and when differences arose amongst them, God raised up prophets in their midst to guide them with truth, and people only differed among themselves out of mere jealousy. ‡

This was the Mother Religion. § In course of time as the wave of propagation flowed in distant age and clime, and humanity split up into innumerable sections and scattered throughout the world, to every people, || in their own tongues, ¶ was conveyed in every age, ** this Divine message of wisdom and of truth, †† through an endless succession of prophets and seers. ‡‡

It will thus be seen that the Islam of

* Koran, II. 140.

§ XII 13.

** XII, 38.

† III. 67.

|| X 47.

†† II. 151.

‡ II 213.

¶ XIV 4.

‡‡ XI 78.

Mohammed is not a new religion : its only work lies in restoring the primitive faiths of the prophets and preachers of bygone ages to their original purity and simplicity. And it is not for the Moslem to slander any of the great teachers who have long since done their work and retired from this world ; he dare not utter a word of disrespect towards them. On the contrary, he is bound to render the greatest deference to each one of them.* Speaking of the prophets of the house of Israel, the Koran says :—

“Say ye, We believe in God, and what has been revealed to us, and what was revealed to Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the tribes, and what was given to Moses and Jesus, and what was given to the (other) prophets from their Lord—we make no distinction between any of them ; and to Him we submit.”†

And it is not only to Moses and Jesus and Mohammed that the Moslem owes allegiance, but to *all* the prophets of *all* the nations who have appeared in different ages of the history of mankind. Thus, along with a thousand others, in India Rama, Krishna, and Buddha, have alike a place in

* Koran, iv. 150-52.

† ii. 136, cf iii 84.

the hearts of all the followers of Islam.*

ITS IDEA OF BROTHERHOOD.

In Islam, all humanity is one vast brotherhood, with God as their Creator and Master who looks upon them all as equal. All the barriers raised against it by the self-interest of man are destroyed, and divisions on the ground of religion merely are not recognized; its teachings being directly opposed to all sectarianism and based on the broadest principle.

“Ye people!” such was the Divine message which Mohammed brought to his people, “verily We have created you of a male and a female, and have made you races and tribes, that ye might know one another; but verily the most honourable of you in the sight of God is he who most fears to do evil.”†

“God looked towards the people of this earth: the Arabs hated the non-Arabs, except the best among them of the people of the book. He says, I have only raised thee up that I may prove thee, and prove

*The good old learned doctors of Islam have specially made mention of these prophets of India. In our own days Maulana Abdul-Kaiyum of Hyderabad (Deccan) and Maulana Hasan Nizami of Delhi have laid great stress on this point.

† Koran, xlix. 13.

(others) by thee.”*

“Man is only a pious believer or a wicked sinner.”†

“Be ye all worshippers of God and brothers to one another, like as God has commanded you.”‡

ITS EXHORTATION TO UNITY.

And an appeal for reconciliation and co-operation in the matter of truth is thus made :

“Say thou, Will ye dispute with us concerning God, when He is our Lord and your Lord, and we have our works, and ye have your works, and we are sincerely His.”§

“Say thou, Ye people of the book ! come to an equitable word between us and you—that we will not worship any except God, nor join anything with Him, nor take each other for lords beside God.”||

“Ye people of the book ! be not extravagant in your religion, nor say of God (any other) than the truth.”¶

SECTARIANISM CONDEMNED.

“Verily, those who divide their religion and become sectaries, have thou nothing to

§ Koran, ii. 464.
§ Koran, ii. 139.

† Ibid, 792.
|| iii. 64.

‡ Ibid, 904.
¶ iv. 171.

do with them—their affair is only with God: and He will inform them of what they have done,”* “They say, Nay! we’ll follow whereon we found our fathers. What! and though their fathers had no sense at all, nor were they guided aright?” †

“They say, None shall enter paradise except such as are Jews or Christians. That is their fancy. Say thou, Bring your proofs, if ye speak the truth. Nay! whoso submits himself to God and is a doer of good, he shall have his reward with his Lord: there shall come no fear on them, nor shall they grieve.” ‡

Speaking of the over-bearing conduct of some Jews towards the gentiles, Mohammed thus taught: “They say, There is no obligation upon us in regard to the gentiles: but they utter a lie against God knowingly. . . . These shall have no portion in the hereafter, nor shall God speak to them, nor shall He look upon them on the day of resurrection, nor shall He purify them, but for them shall be a painful torment.” §

And when certain Jews justified themselves by their Law, Mohammed only said: “And verily there is a party of them who

* Koran, vi 159

‡ Ibid, 111, 112.

† ii 170

§ iii. 75-7.

torture the book with their tongues, that ye may take it to be from the book; but it is not from the book. And they say, It is from God, but it is not from God; and they tell a lie against God knowingly.”*

ITS PRACTICAL BROTHERHOOD.

Thus, to a Moslem this wide world presents a vast field for co-operation in the struggle of life towards its ultimate goal. His religion leads him to seek the welfare of humanity in the co-operative spirit as it were, rather than in the competitive. He might have no objection in treating with a non-Moslem, for religion is no barrier to him, unless he is checked by the peculiar caste-rules of the people he is desirous to approach. He may with a quiet conscience eat and even intermarry with them. Mohammed himself, strictly opposed as he was to the religion of the idolaters, had married three of his own daughters† to them, though in the early stormy days of Islam it proved disastrous. His daughters were ill-treated and finally turned out by their unbelieving husbands, who also joined the people in persecuting Mohammed and his fol-

* Koran, iii 78.

† Zeinab, Rukeyyah, and Umm Kulthum.

lowers. When one of them, Abul-As, came over to Mohammed six years later, he allowed his daughter to be united to him under the previous marriage—no fresh ceremony or dowry being required * Some other idolaters had also Moslem wives,† and their marriages were as plainly recognized by Mohammed as those of Moslems having idolatress-wives‡ I need hardly mention that the marriages of Moslems with Jews and Christians and all who believe in God and His moral government form a part of the Mohammedan Common Law.

This was the practical brotherhood of man that knew no colour, no creed, and which bade men meet on the common platform of humanity, and humanity alone.

All wrangling upon religion was absolutely shut out:—

“The Jews say, The Christians stand on nothing; and the Christians say, The Jews stand on nothing. Yet they read the book. Thus say those who are gentiles like as these say. But God shall judge between them on the day of resurrection concerning that whereon they dispute.”§ “They

* Ibn Abbas in Abu Daud and Tirmidhi

† e g, Safwan and Ikiamah

‡ e g, Ibn Sufyan and Hakim.

§ Koran, ii 113.

say, Be ye Jews or Christians, that ye may be guided aright. Say thou, Nay! but the creed of Abraham, the upright man, who was not of those who joined (other gods) with God.”*

THE CODE OF ISLAM.

And the code of Islām is thus given:—

“Come,” says the Koran, “I’ll tell you what your Lord has forbidden you—that ye join not anything with Him. And be good to (your) parents. . . and draw not nigh to filthy actions—to what appears thereof and to what is hidden; and kill not a being which God has forbidden (you to kill) unless for justice. . . And give full measure and a just balance. . . And when ye speak be just, although it be (against) one who is of kin: and the command of God fulfil ye. That is what He enjoins you, that ye may be mindful. And this is my straight way; so follow it.”†

This was the life according to the Original Religion, and whoso broke from it was regarded as “going astray.” In the Koran such people are called an “unjust people” and “transgressors.” “But those who do wrong follow their lusts without knowledge.‡

* Koran, ii. 135.

† vi. 151-53.

‡ xxx 29.

RESPONSIBILITY OF MAN.

“Will God make those who believe and do good works like those who do evil in the earth? or will He make the pious like the wicked?”* “God’s is what is in the heavens and what is in the earth, that He may reward those who do evil with what they do, and may reward those who do good with good.”†

“Let them alone who take their religion for a play and a sport, and whom the life of this world has deceived; and remind them hereby that a soul shall become liable for what it has earned (of good or evil): it shall have no patron or intercessor beside God; and if it could atone with the fullest atonement, it would not be accepted from it.”‡

A LIFE OF WORK.

Islam, above all, is a religion of works. The service of man and the good of humanity constitute pre-eminently the service and worship of God.

“The best of men,” said Mohammed, “is he who understands religion; who when people stand in need of his services, benefits them.”§

* Koran, xxxvii. 27.

† vi. 70.

† III 31.

§ Sayings, 422.

A selfless life of love is the life of a Moslem. Being asked as to the best part of faith, Mohammed said, "That thou love for God, and hate for God, and that thou love for men what thou lovest for thyself, and hate for them what thou hatest for thyself."*

"Ye shall not believe unless ye love one another."†

"He has no faith who fulfils not his trust, and he has no religion who fulfils not his promise."‡

"By Him in whose hand my life is! no worshipper (truly) believes until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself."§

"Has not God made man two eyes and a tongue and two lips, and pointed him out the two highways (of good and evil)?"

"Yet he attempts not the steep one! And what shall make thee know what that steep one is?—To free the captive, or to feed on the day of famine the orphan who is of kin, or the poor that lies in the dust; then, to be of those who believe (in God) and enjoin steadfastness on each other and enjoin compassion on each other.—These are the blessed people."||

* *Sayings*, 208.
Ibid., 214.

† Ibid., 194
‡ Ibid., 215.
§ *Koran*, xc 8-18.

The essence of religion is declared to be the service of afflicted humanity:

"Hast thou seen him who calls the religion a lie? That is (the man) who pushes away the orphan, and stirs not up (others) to feed the poor."*

And the following is conveyed to a heartless worshipper:

"And woe to those who pray, who of their prayers are unmindful, who make a show, and refuse help (to the needy)!"†

Work, and work alone, is the true test of a believer in the sight of God:

"Verily those who say, Our Lord is God, and then keep straight—there shall come no fear on them, nor shall they grieve;—these are the people of paradise, to dwell therein for ever, as a reward for what they have done."‡

"Verily, those who believe, and those who are Jews, and the Christians, and the Sabæans—whoso believes in God and the last day, and does good—they have their reward with their Lord, and there shall come no fear on them, nor shall they grieve."§

FAITHFUL WORK.

Addressing a larger humanity, Moham-

* Koran cvii 1-3.

† cvii 4-7.

‡ xlv. 13, 14, xli. 30-22.

§ li. 62, v. 69.

med thus appealed to them to sink their petty differences: "To every one of you has God given a law and an open way—and if He had pleased, He would surely have made you one people, but (He has done otherwise), that He might try you in what He has given you respectively. Strive then to excel each other in good works; to God is your return altogether, then will He inform you of that concerning which ye disagree."*

EARNEST WORK.

The life of the believer, in Islam, is a severe trial: "Do men imagine that they will be left alone to say, We believe, and not be tried?"† "Verily God has bought of the faithful their souls and their wealth."‡

"The believer dies," said Mohammed, "with his sweat on the brow."§ "He is not a believer who eats his fill while his neighbour lies hungry by his side."|| "The world is a prison for the believer and a paradise for the unbeliever."¶

The Moslem Paradise is declared to be "beneath the shade of swords."*** "Hell-fire," said Mohammed, "is veiled by pas-

* Koran, v 48.

§ *Sayings*, 613.

** Ibid, 995.

† xxix. 2.

|| Ibid, 614.

‡ ix. 111.

¶ Ibid, 615.

sions, and paradise is veiled by hardships.”*

THE DUTY OF MAN.

And what is the duty of man in Islam?—

“Verily,” says the Koran, “God commands justice and the doing of good, and the giving to those of kin (their due); and He forbids filthy actions and iniquity and transgression.”†

“When one of you sees wrong-doing,” said Mohammed, let him undo it with his hand; and if he cannot do it, then let him speak against it with his tongue; and if he cannot do this either, then let him abhor it with his heart—and this is the least of faith.”‡

“By Him in whose hand stands my life! bid what is reasonable, and forbid what is wrong, or He will certainly send against you a chastisement from Him: then will ye call on Him, and He will not answer you.”§

“Assist one another in goodness and piety, but assist not one another in sin and enmity; and fear God; verily, God is severe in punishing.”||

* *Sayings*, 322.

† *Sayings*, 235

‡ Koran, xvi 90,

§ *Ibid*, 238.

|| Koran, v. 2.

[HIS FREE AGENCY.

The free agency of man is throughout maintained: "When they commit a filthy action, they say, We found our fathers at it and God bids us do it. Say thou, God bids (you) not to commit filthy actions. Will ye say of God what ye do not know."*

"Say thou, My Lord has only forbidden filthy actions, what appears thereof, and what is hidden, and sin and rebellion without right, and that ye join with God what He has sent down no authority for, and that ye should say of God what ye do not know."†

"Verily, God changes not (His grace) which is in men until they change what is in themselves (by sin)."‡

SOME SOCIAL QUESTIONS.

Having said something of the general tenour of the reforms effected by Islam in the domain of creeds, sects, and nations, of beliefs many and practices varied, I next come to take a very cursory view of some of the social reforms effected by Islam beginning with the subject of woman, her position, etc., from the Islamic standpoint.

* Koran, vii. 28

† Ibid, 33.

‡ xiii. 11

RESPECT OF WOMAN.

"Respect women," is one of the first lessons of Islam. The Koran says: "Ye people! fear your Lord who created you of the same species, and created thereof its mate, and from them two have spread abroad so many men and women. And fear God by whom ye beg of one another, and respect women. Verily God watches over you."*

HER POSITION.

Mohammed called woman, 'the most inestimable thing in the world,' 'the handiwork of God,' 'the mother of men.'

She is by no means any inferior in her social life. "Men are but agents of women," says the Koran.†

Her married life is one of the pleasantest in Islam. "Your wives are a garment to you, and ye are garment to them."‡ "They have (rights against men) like as (men) have (rights) against them, in reason."§ "Men shall have a portion of what (their) parents and kindred leave, and women (also) shall have a portion of what (their) parents and kindred leave, whether it be little or much: a set portion is theirs."||

* Koran, iv. 1.

§ Ibid, 228

† Ibid., 34

|| iv. 7.

‡ ii 187.

"Men shall have a portion of what they earn, and women also a portion of what they earn."*

MARRIAGE.

Marriage, according to the Mohammedan law, is not simply a civil contract, not a social partnership merely, neither an alliance for convenience to be dissolved at pleasure. It is an institution of God, whose foundations are laid and principles fixed and enduring as the human race itself. It is a sacred, "strict bond of union,"† with the object "that ye may confide in them (wives) and that there may be love and tenderness between you."‡

Some of Mohammed's sayings with regard to marriage might be quoted with advantage: "Thou wilt see nothing conducive of love like marriage."§ "Matrimonial alliances between families and people increase love more than anything else." "When a worshipper (of God) marries he perfects half his religion."|| "Marry those whom you will love and who will love you."¶ "When any of you marry let them meet each other first."** "No marriage can take place without the express will of the

* Koran, iv 32.

† Ibid, 21

‡ xxx 21.

§ Sayings, 173

|| Ibid, 475.

¶ Ibid., 487.

** Ibid., 484-86.

woman." "If she consent not, she cannot be married."*

WOMAN'S SHARE IN IT.

Perfect liberty is allowed to a woman who has reached the age of puberty, to marry or refuse to marry a particular man, independent of her guardian, who has no power to dispose of her in marriage without her consent or against her will; while the objection is reserved for the girl married by her guardian during her infancy to ratify or dissolve the contract immediately on reaching her majority.

Among the conditions which are requisite for the validity of a contract of marriage are understanding, puberty, and freedom, in the contracting parties. A person who is an infant in the eye of the law is disqualified from entering into any legal transaction, and is consequently incompetent to contract a marriage. A marriage contracted by a minor who has not arrived at the age of discretion, or who does not possess understanding, or who cannot comprehend the consequences of the act, is a mere nullity.

In Islam, the capacity of a woman, adult and sane, to contract herself in marriage is

* Cf. *Sayings*, 479 83.

absolute; she requires no guardian, though to supplement a presumed incapacity of the woman, to understand the nature of the contract, to settle the terms and other matters of a similar import, and to guard the girl from being victimized by an unscrupulous adventurer, or from marrying a person morally or socially unfitted for her, a guardian is generally recommended, such as a mother, an elder sister, or a male member of the family competent enough to act as such. In law, the woman is mistress of her own actions. She is not only entitled to consult her own interests in matrimony, but can appoint whomsoever she chooses to represent her and protect her legitimate interests. Under the law, the guardian acts as an attorney on behalf of the woman deriving all his powers from her and acting solely for her benefit.*

SOME MORE QUESTIONS.

While on this subject, I may be allowed to notice the teaching of Islam on polygamy, concubinage, divorce, and the system of female seclusion.

I may briefly mention that none of these is included in Islam.

* Abridged from Justice Syed Ameer Ali's *Personal Law of the Mahomedans*, in loco.

Islam, wherever it found difficulty in the matter of existing society which it could ill afford to ignore, quietly laid down rules, so that when the time was ripe for it, they might from within work out its abolition.

POLYGAMY.

On polygamy, the Koran says:—

“Ye may marry of such women as seem proper for you by twos and threes and fours: but if ye fear ye cannot act equitably, [and ye can never act equitably between women although ye fain would do it,* and God has not made a man two hearts within him,†] then one only, or what your right hands have already got; that is the chief thing—that ye be not partial.”‡

CONCUBINAGE.

Concubinage is distinctly prohibited throughout the Koran.§

DIVORCE.

Divorce has been strongly denounced by Mohammed as “the most displeasing of men’s actions in the sight of God.”|| The Koran frequently refers such matters to arbitration for reconciliation,¶ and thus

* Koran, iv. 129.

‡ iv 3

|| Cf , *Sayings*, 179-82

† xxxiii. 4

§ xxiv 32; iv. 25; v. 5.

¶ iv 35, 128.

exhorts them to re-unite: "And if ye hate them, it may be that ye hate a thing wherein God has placed much good for you."*

In the Mohammedan law, the wife also is entitled to demand a separation on the ground of ill-usage, want of proper maintenance, and various other causes, but unless she showed some good reasons for demanding the separation, she lost her dowry, as when the divorce originated with the husband (except in case of in chastity) he had to give up to her everything he settled upon her in marriage.

THE ZENANA SYSTEM.

Throughout the Koran we have no trace of the Zenana system, by which a woman is entirely withdrawn from the society of men and the freer atmosphere outside her own world of four walls.

DECORUM.

Of course, modesty is a virtue upon which Mohammed laid the greatest emphasis without respect of sex: "Speak to the faithful (among) men, that they restrain their eyes, and preserve their modesty; that will be more decent for them; verily God is informed of what they do. And speak to the

* Koran, iv 19.

faithful (among) women, that they restrain their eyes and preserve this modesty and display not their ornaments, except what (necessarily) appears thereof, and let them throw their kerchiefs over their bosoms, . . . and let them not beat with their feet that their ornaments which they hide may be known. . . .*

"O Prophet! speak to thy wives and to thy daughters and to the women of the faithful that they let down their wrappers over them; that will be nearer for them to be known, and they will not be affronted."†

SLAVERY.

Regarding slavery, I can here only state that Mohammed looked upon the system as altogether inhuman. He said: "Nothing pleases God more than the freeing of slaves."‡

He enacted a law that slaves should be allowed to purchase their liberty by the wages of their service, and that in case the unfortunate beings had no present means of gain and wanted to earn in some other employment enough for that purpose, they should be allowed to leave their masters on

* Koran. xxiv 30, 31.

† xxxiii. 59

‡ Cf, *Sayings*, 181, Koran, xc. 13; ii. 177; etc.

simply making an agreement to that effect.* He also provided that sums should be advanced to the slaves from public treasury to purchase their liberty.†

The whole tenour of Mohammed's teachings made this trade of human lives impossible. I could dwell upon it a little longer, but should pass on to the respect for life taught in Islam.

REGARD FOR LIFE.

Wanton destruction of life is considered reprehensible: "There is no moving thing in the earth, nor a bird that flies with its wings, but is a being like to you, - . . . to their Lord shall they be gathered."‡

"Whoso kills a sparrow for nothing, it will cry aloud to God on the day of resurrection, saying, O my Lord! such-and-such a man killed me for nothing: he never killed me for any good."§

"Take not things which have life to shoot (arrows) at."||

The Prophet forbade any living thing to be killed tied up and bound.¶ He also forbade the setting of brute beasts against one another.** He forbade the striking on

* Koran, xxiv. 33.

§ *Sayings*, 36

** *Ibid.*, 41.

† ix 60

|| *Ibid.*, 39.

‡ vi. 38.

¶ *Ibid.*, 40.

the face of an animal and the branding thereon.*

Mohammed taught that men would be specially judged on the day of judgment with regard to their character to their dumb and humble servitors.†

Regarding the human life the Koran teaches : “ Whoso kills a being unless it be for another being, or for evil-doing in the land, it is as though he killed all mankind, and whoso saves one, it is as though he saved all mankind.”‡

JUST WARFARE.

The principle of war is also inculcated in Islam, but it is not, as is generally supposed, directed against all non-Moslems because they are non-Moslems, but it is a struggle for principle and in self-defence. Speaking on the subject the Koran says :—

“ What! will ye not fight against a people . . . who begin the fight with you themselves?§ . . . And what ails you that ye fight not in the way of God, and for the weak among men, women, and children, who say, Our Lord ! bring us forth from this city of oppressive people, and give

, 42
v 32.

† Ibid , 42 8, 50 55.
§ Ibid., ix. 12.

us from before Thee a patron, and give us from before Thee a helper."*

"Permission is given to those who are fought against (to fight) for that they have been wronged."†

A RULE.

The following is the rule of an Islamic warfare: "Fight in the way of God with those who fight with you, but transgress not; verily, God loves not the transgressors. . . . But if they desist, then let there be no hostility, except against the wrong-doers."‡

THE INTERPRETATION.

Lest the above might be misconstrued, I quote the following:—

"As to those who have not fought against you for religion, nor turned you out of your homes, God does not forbid you to be good to them and to act justly towards them; surely God loves the just. God only forbids you to make friends of those who have fought against you for religion, and have turned you out of your homes, and have assisted each other in your expulsion; and whoso makes friends of them, these are the unjust."§

* Koran, iv, 75. † xxii, 39. ‡ ii 190-93. § ix 8, 9.

RELIGIOUS TOLERATION.

Above all, the greatest religious toleration has been inculcated by the Prophet of Islam:—

“Say thou, O ye who believe not! I worship not what ye worship, and ye worship not what I worship; nor will I worship what ye worship, nor will ye worship what I worship—ye have your religion, and I have my religion.”*

“Abuse not those whom they call on beside God, for then they may abuse God despitefully without knowledge.”†

“Let there be no compulsion in religion; the right way is in itself distinct from the wrong.”‡

CONCLUDING REMARKS.

I find I have to add a few words more to say that there is no eternal law as regards human actions, that the Divine ordinances which regulate the conduct of men are the results of growth and development, and that the whole world is in a process of evolution. Mohammed's commands and aphorisms therefore which have been called forth by the passing exigencies of the day or related to the circumstances and requirements of a primitive and archaic society,

* Koran, cix.

† vi. 108.

‡ ii. 256.

will have to be differentiated from what is permanent and general (such as I have only noticed here) and what was temporary. "Ye are in an age," said Mohammed, "in which if ye abandon one-tenth of what is now ordered ye will be ruined. After this, a time will come when he who will observe one-tenth of what is now ordered will be saved."*

* *Sayings*, 794

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